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A CHRISTIAN VIEW

OF

CHRISTIAN HISTORY,

FROM

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Apostolic to Mediæval Times.

BY

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CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

If a number of ordinary readers were to be asked where any historical inquiries concerning the Birth of Christianity should commence, probably the most general answer would be that we ought to begin with the history of our Lord, of whom it has been the custom to speak, historically, as the Founder of the Church, or the Founder of the Christian Religion. This way of stating the matter is not, however, quite correct. The Scriptural idea of our blessed Lord in connexion with the Church is that of perfect identification, so that the Church is called the body of Christ[1], and Christ Himself[2], and this idea is not strictly compatible with the usual sense in which the word "founder" is applied, as that of one laying the foundation of a structure, and using materials external to his own person; or of one not

[1] Col. i. 24. Eph. i. 23.

[2] 1 Cor. xii. 12.

only originating the plan of a system, but also carrying it out, in a greater or less degree, into practical organization.

Taking the Scriptural idea of identity between Christ and His members,—the Christian persons of whom His Church is composed,—we shall find that the work of our Lord in this respect was not so much that of originating it as an economy, as that of making such an origination possible and practicable. This He did, in the first place, by accomplishing a certain work in His own person, by which that person became the medium of salvation—salvation being, as regards mankind, the object for which the Church was originated; secondly, by appointing the twelve Apostles to be the agents, by whom the actual foundation of the Church was to be undertaken; thirdly, by instructing these agents, during His intercourse with them, in the nature of the work which they would have to do, and in the manner in which they were to do it; fourthly, by giving them power to do that which He had shown them how to do. We may take these in order, as giving us the true starting-point for the history of Christianity.

§. *Christianity originating from Christ's Person.*

1. First, then, our Lord was founder of the Church in the sense that He made His own person the medium of salvation. Of this work the account is given to us

in the four Gospels, and we find it consisted in His Incarnation, in the obedience of His life, in the merit of His undeserved death for others, in the power of His triumphant resurrection from death, in the glorification of His human nature by its ascension and session at the right hand of God the Father. This work placed the person of Christ in a twofold relation to the Church; for He became the Mediator between God and man, making reconciliation an actual, and union a possible, fact: and He also became the substance, the mysterious spiritual substance, which was to form the spiritual life of every living member of the Church. Thus we find our Lord frequently drawing attention to His own person as the source of salvation and life, not merely in the sense of "I have power to give you light and life," but as the very thing itself that He would give, "I am the light of the world," "I am the way, the truth, and the life," "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved," "I am the vine, ye are the branches," "I am that bread of life," "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day," "I am the resurrection and the life." If that sense of Holy Scripture is most likely to be true which is nearest to the literal meaning of the words, we must consider these, and many more such examples of our Lord's *self-assertion*, in their historical bearing, as showing that He Himself was to become, by

His work, the actual fountain and stream of original spiritual life, and continued spiritual existence: and in such a sense as He became the Foundation, so He became the Founder of His Church.

§. *Christianity transmitted from Christ through the Apostles.*

2. The appointment of the twelve Apostles as the agents by whom the foundation of the Church was to be built upon, and its establishment to be carried out, is simply a piece of Scripture history, which needs little elucidation beyond that contained in the actual statements of the Gospel narrative. The earliest mention of the Apostles as a body is to be found in the following places of the first three Gospels: Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 14; Luke vi. 13[3]; where our Lord appears to

[3] It may be observed that St. Peter is always named first in the Scriptural lists of the Apostles, and Judas Iscariot last. The others vary in their places.

Matt. x. 2.	Mark iii. 16.	Luke vi. 14.	Acts i. 13–26.
Simon Peter and	Simon Peter and	Simon Peter and	Peter and
Andrew his brother,	James & } Boan-	Andrew,	James, and
James & } sons of	John, } erges	James and	John and
John, } Zebedee	Andrew and	John,	Andrew,
Philip and	Philip, and	Philip and	Philip and
Bartholomew,	Bartholomew and	Bartholomew,	Thomas,
Thomas and	Matthew, and	Matthew and	Bartholomew and
Matthew,	Thomas and	Thomas,	Matthew,
James, son of Alpheus, and	James, son of Alpheus, and	James, son of Alpheus, and	James, son of Alpheus, and
Lebbeus Thaddeus,	Thaddeus and	Simon Zelotes,	Simon Zelotes, and
Simon the Canaanite, and	Simon the Canaanite, and	Judas, brother of James, and	Judas, brother of James [Matthias].
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

The number twelve was made up again, after the death of Judas

have selected these twelve from the number of His disciples for a present and temporary purpose, "that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils," as it is most plainly expressed by St. Mark in the second of the passages referred to. Beyond this temporary object, however, our Lord (in His foreknowledge) looked onward to their permanent employment as His deputies and agents, as we may see in the long discourse to them recorded by St. Matthew. For "ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles," refers, it is clear, to the persecutions which the Apostles had to suffer after our Lord's ascension, there being no trace of such persecutions happening to them during the ministry to which they went forth on this their first appointment. From this time, however, they evidently formed a distinctively separated body of men, the especial attendants of our Lord, and those who were receiving instructions and knowledge for their future guidance and enlightenment, even more than for any present object.

Iscariot, by the election of St. Matthias. Probably St. Paul made up the number to twelve again on the death of James the brother of John, slain by Herod. So it may be concluded from a comparison of Acts xii. 2 with Acts xiii. 2. Whether St. Barnabas was actually an Apostle, and, if so, whether he supplied a vacancy caused by the death of another of the twelve, we have no clear evidence.

§. *Christ's Instructions respecting Christianity.*

3. A careful examination of the Gospels will convince an unprejudiced reader that a large proportion of the words spoken by our Lord were spoken primarily to the Apostles (if not to them alone), and with reference to their future work. An illustration of what is meant may be found in the parable of the sower. However many may have heard this parable, it is hardly likely that any understood its meaning, more than the Apostles did themselves, before our Lord's subsequent interpretation of it. But that interpretation was given to the Apostles alone, and with a clear bearing upon that future time when they would go forth as the agents of the sower, sowing the Word in His name and behalf. So also the prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem contained in Matt. xxiv. appear to have been confided to the ears of the twelve alone; as do the parables of the ten virgins and of the talents, and the prophecy of the last judgment, which follow: all of which would be of the highest value to those to whom they were spoken *in reference to their special vocation* as Apostles.

Thus, much of what is now open to the Church at large as our ordinary text book of Divine instruction, was at first given only to the twelve Apostles; and what has now a general application (at least *underlying* its particular application to the ministerial office), had then

the special bearing only, and only for the use of them to whom it was specially spoken. To them it was "given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," because to them was to be entrusted the work of establishing that kingdom among men on the basis of those mysteries.

The Gospel of St. John seems to contain a more exact and continuous statement of these mysteries which our Lord gave His Apostles to know than either of the others; and we shall probably be not far wrong if we take that Gospel as indicating the course of theological instruction by which the Apostles were stored with knowledge for future use. An analysis of that Gospel shows that a large portion of it bears very directly upon the future exercise of the Apostolic office in founding the Church; and that some chapters (as, for example, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth inclusive), were spoken to the Apostles in private, and with a direct view to their realization of the true position which they were to occupy when Christ was no longer with them as He had hitherto been. Beginning, then, with our Lord's own words and acts in that Gospel, we come, after a narrative of the call of several disciples, to the miracle at Cana, which occupies the second chapter. The object of this was to "manifest the glory" of Christ; that is, to declare the glorious Divine nature of the person who had wrought such a wonder; and to show, withal, His power to raise

the things of nature to a higher condition. Immediately after this follows the theological statement of a still more astonishing re-creation—the new birth of human nature, man by man. Then, in the sixth chapter, our Lord gives what may be called a prophecy of the Eucharistic mystery, only to be fully interpreted, like other prophecies, after its fulfilment. In the eighth chapter the mysteries of our Lord's eternal existence and His equality with the Father are set forth, and, by consequence, the doctrine of plurality in unity. In the tenth chapter, the pastoral work of Jesus in His visible Church is declared both as abstract truth, and also by way of example. In the next chapter, His power over the invisible Church is manifested in the crowning miracle of His ministry, the resurrection of Lazarus. The fourteenth and following chapters, to the seventeenth, are occupied with other mysteries of the new dispensation, bearing reference almost entirely to the great truth of our Lord's perpetual presence with His Church[4].

[4] It may be convenient to subjoin in a note the heads of this analysis of the Theological Gospel.

Chapter	ii.	Divine Nature of the Man Christ Jesus.
„	iii.	Sacrament of Holy Baptism.
„	vi.	Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.
„	viii.	Eternal existence of the Son. His equality with the Father. Doctrine of Plurality in Unity.
„	x.	Pastoral work of Christ in the visible Church.
„	xi.	Power of Christ in the invisible world.
„	xiv.—xvii.	Various mysteries connected with Christ's perpetual presence.

Thus, by many sayings that were unintelligible to them at the time, the Apostles had their minds furnished with stores of Divine knowledge. And although "they understood not these things at the first," yet the promise made by their Master was amply fulfilled: "When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have spoken unto you;" and "when Jesus was risen from the dead, then remembered they that He had spoken these things unto them." While He was with them they were like children painfully acquiring stores of knowledge, the use and meaning of which they are unable to see. When He was gone from them, and they were left to carry on His work, they were like the same children grown into learned adults, having the key to what had hitherto seemed useless knowledge, and being thus able to make good and immediate application of all that had been stored in their minds.

But, after all, it may be said, the Gospels contain no plain and detailed instruction such as might seem suitable for so great a work as the origination of an institution which was to spread over the whole world, to last for 2000 years, and to be the religious system of millions upon millions of men. And such indeed is the fact. And moreover it seems to be indicated that no such instructions *were* given by our Lord before His death, as might have been the case even though we do

not find them handed down to us in the Gospels. For when the work of these twelve agents and deputies of Christ was about to begin, they were plainly "at sea" as to the *exact* nature of it, or the exact manner of their doing it. Further instructions, and *the key to all,* were still wanting. They had heard many things about the kingdom of heaven and of their Master: their thoughts were full of it; perhaps they had got so far as to give up their expectations of temporal supremacy, and knew now that it was a spiritual system. Yet they asked our Lord at the last moment, just before His Ascension, a question which shows how mystified they still were on the subject: "Lord, wilt Thou *at this time* restore again the kingdom to Israel?" as if the old idea of a temporal or at least a Jewish ascendancy was still almost uppermost in their minds. Their conduct, however, soon shows itself as that of men who had received light as to the course which they were to follow. A few weeks before they "all forsook Him and fled;" and later there were marks of great indecision, for though commanded to go into Galilee to meet their risen Master, they still remained at Jerusalem, and are rebuked for their want of faith. As soon, however, as Christ had ascended from their sight, the voice of the angel seems to have roused them to their work: "Why stand ye here gazing up into heaven?" And from idly gazing upward with longing eyes after Him they seemed to have lost,

they went back to Jerusalem, and settled to the work He had left them to perform, like men who knew what they had to do, and who possessed both will and courage to go through with it.

The first portion of that work was undertaken with remarkable confidence and straightforwardness, notwithstanding it involved the assumption of astounding authority. It was the election of an Apostle to fill up the vacancy caused in their number by the death of Judas. Now the more they had come to know about the exalted character of the Person by whom they themselves had been appointed and ordained, the more bold and authoritative must that act have seemed, which was so literal an imitation (as far as they could imitate it) of what He had done. Our Lord had set them apart with great solemnity, spending the whole of the previous night in prayer. At a later period He had consecrated them to the ordinary work of the Ministry, and to the Apostleship, by breathing on them, and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained[5]:" and they now, without any hesitation, set apart another person to be like themselves, to have the same power and authority; an

[5] St. John xx. 22. It is to be observed that the permanent *extraordinary* or miraculous qualifications of their office were not conferred until the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them at Pentecost.

Apostle of man's ordaining, to be "numbered with those eleven Apostles" who had been ordained by Him of Whose exalted Nature and Person they had now the most infallible proofs.

This unhesitating manner of undertaking so great an act is almost conclusive evidence that the Apostles must have been backed by some authority much higher than that of their own ideas as to what would be best to do. There is not a vestige of *record* that Christ empowered them to ordain Matthias as soon as the lot had decided that he was to be preferred to the other; but the very character of the act seems to show that they certainly were so empowered: and that when He was "seen of them forty days, speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God," this election and ordination was one of the "things" of which He had been "speaking."

It is in this forty days' instruction, therefore, concerning the Church, that we are to look for a key to the resolution and the unhesitating straightforwardness with which the Apostles began to settle the details of its foundation: but as such instructions were intended for their practical guidance, and not for our information or spiritual use, they are not recorded among the words of our Lord as the theological instructions are[6]. And

[6] There are other things of importance to which the same argument applies. Such, for instance, as the observance of the Lord's Day instead of the Sabbath; the constant use of the Episcopate in every Christian

we may thus conclude that as the twelve Apostles were a body of men chosen and appointed by our Lord to act as His earthly agents and deputies in founding that system by which the benefits of His work were to be conveyed to men; so in the founding of that system they were carrying out no plan or invention of their own, but were acting upon the theological principles and practical details which had been given to them by our Lord Himself as the design of the structure which it was their work to build up in the world.

§. *Christ's Delegation of Power to the Apostles.*

4. It was not enough, however, for the intended founders of the Church to receive command and instruction as to their work, they must also have ability given them to enable them to accomplish it.

A mighty and stupendous object was set before them, twelve ordinary, unlearned, and uninfluential men as they were. The KINGDOM so long expected was at hand, and they—fishermen, a tax-gatherer, and peasants used to an obscure life—were to be its founders. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," was the command given them, and yet they had never gone, hitherto, beyond the shore and the desert and the

community; the Liturgical principles and usages which—as appears more and more clearly—were common to every portion of the early Church.

mountain by which Palestine was hemmed in, and had held intercourse with scarcely any but men of their own kindred and nation. It was less wonderful for St. Paul to receive a command of such a nature than for St. Peter, or St. James, or St. John to receive it, for he had been instructed from his youth in all the wisdom of his nation, had held intercourse with learned and travelled men, had probably travelled himself, and was at least a man of high education and intellectual ability. But for these peasants and fishermen, how could such "weak things of the world" ever hope to "confound the strong," the sin, the Judaism, the idolatry, the atheism with which the world abounded?—these, of whom it could be so easily "perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men"? It needed indeed such a faith as that of which their Master had spoken, a faith able to "say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea," it needed for these men to have such a faith, for them to set about their task with any confidence that they should be able to accomplish it. But they had good cause for believing that they should be able to fulfil the command given them, even to the letter: a good foundation, that is, for the faith by which they really were upheld in going forth to their task. For when they had, in still lingering, but only just lingering, doubt and ignorance, asked the question of their departing Master, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore

again the kingdom to Israel?" He gave them the reply that it was not for them to know the secrets of God's future times and seasons, but that having a present work to do, they should be fully fitted and endowed for that work: "Ye shall receive *power*, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." So that our Lord's last words to them, in effect, were: "Go forth to accomplish this great task of founding my kingdom throughout the world, and doubt not that a power shall be bestowed upon you equal to the mightiness of the task assigned you[7].

The twelve Apostles (Matthias being "numbered with the eleven") waited about ten days longer in retirement and continual worship, according to the command, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endowed with power from on high[8]," and then the promise was fulfilled. Let us see how: and let us try to get a good, clear idea of what that Day of Pentecost on which it was fulfilled really brought about.

We must imagine ourselves in Jerusalem in the latter end of April or the beginning of May, at the time when

[7] It is to this power that St. Paul refers in 2 Cor. iii. 6, when he says, "Who hath made us able ministers," i. e., who hath given us *ability to be ministers* "of the New Testament."

[8] Luke xxiv. 49.

the harvest has all been cut, and is being thrashed out in the hot, dry air of an Eastern summer or early autumn. It is one of the three special religious seasons which all male Jews were required by the law to keep at Jerusalem, being the fiftieth day after the Passover. It was the great feast of thanksgiving for the blessings of the harvest, called the Feast of Weeks, as occurring about seven weeks after the Passover; and Pentecost, as being the fiftieth day after the sixteenth of the month Nisan, which was the second day of the Passover, and answered to our Easter Eve[9].

At the preceding Festival a vast multitude had been collected together in and about Jerusalem, partly through the ordinary circumstances of the feast, which always brought many Jews from distant parts, and partly through the special circumstance that at this period there was for several years an expectation among both Jews and Gentiles of some great event about to happen, and some great person about to appear[1]. The Jews,

[9] It was probably the fiftieth day after the *expiration* of the second day of the Passover, or sixteenth of Nisan. That day being the Sabbath, Pentecost would thus fall on the first day of the week, as it has been kept on Whitsunday by the Church.

[1] The Romans appear to have been much impressed by the closing of the temple of Janus, a sign of universal peace throughout their dominions which had not been known for 200 years before; and some had thought that Augustus Cæsar had been the person to whom general expectation was looking forward. The conduct of the Magi shows the general spread of such an expectation.

especially, had the prophecy of Daniel to awaken their expectations. He had predicted a set period for the appearance of the Messiah, and it was calculated that the seventy weeks named in his prophecy would expire about this very time. Hence there were unusually large gatherings at the feasts of this period; and there is reason to think that the number of "Jews out of every nation under heaven," and of the ordinary residents at Jerusalem, sometimes amounted to as many as the immense population of London in the present day. Some of these came, expecting the advent of a Jewish Emperor before whom their Roman conquerors would succumb; others were waiting for the "redemption of Israel" in a far higher and more spiritual sense.

Considering that all male Jews were bound by the law to attend at the three principal feasts, and not at one only, at Jerusalem, it seems exceedingly probable that those who came from a distance to the Passover would take advantage of the sojourn at Jerusalem to obey the law, so far at least as to stay over the intervening six weeks after the octave of the Passover was over, and keep Pentecost also there. It requires no stretch of imagination, then, to suppose that of the multitudes then dwelling in and about Jerusalem a vast number had known the circumstances attending the last week or two of the visible life of Jesus, and had fixed their expectation on Him as "He who should have redeemed

Israel." "The whole world is gone after Him," the Sanhedrim had said, after the triumphal procession of Palm Sunday; as if there were few about them, except their own body, who had not for a time had their attention and interest drawn towards our Lord. And so notorious was the great event of Good Friday, that it seemed a matter of surprise to Cleopas for any one to be ignorant of it: "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and knowest not these things?"

The preparation for the event of the Day of Pentecost consisted therefore of two things. (1.) An unusual gathering of foreign Jews, who had come to Jerusalem in expectation of the Messiah's appearance there. (2.) A general attraction of all their minds to the Person of Jesus by the last acts of His Life.

To the outward eye, however, this preparation had been of little use: for the Crucifixion of Him towards whom so many hearts had been directed in the hope of deliverance, was such a blow as to damp all expectation of His being the Great Person looked for. Most of them knew of His extreme humiliation, but very few indeed, probably, knew of the different aspect which it assumed from the speedy appearance of the Crucified Person in life again. As far as we know, "above five hundred brethren at once" was the utmost number of those by whom our Lord was seen after His Resurrection; and as the time for bearing "witness" to it had not yet

arrived, there is little probability that any of these five hundred would have talked to others of an event which would have seemed impossible to any but those who had known it by the evidence of their senses. It was useless for any one, however convinced of the past themselves, to try and convince others, unless they were able to confirm their witness to this unprecedented event by the testimony of miracles, and for miracles the power was not yet given[2].

So seven weeks passed away. It was known to many that some of His followers lingered about somewhere in Jerusalem; but the general opinion of those who had not already forgotten the striking occurrences by which the late Passover had been signalized, probably tended to the belief that although He had given great reason for supposing He was some great One, yet now the Light of the Nazarene was quite extinguished. Seven weeks is long for any one to be remembered, especially in excited times, and under such unfavourable circumstances: and Jesus of Nazareth as well as His sect were gradually dying out of the minds of His people.

Just then, when the memory of His sayings and of His claims to greatness was faint, but had not quite faded away, there came a startling and unexpected

[2] Though this power was bestowed upon the Apostles by our Lord when He sent them out on their first mission, it does not appear to have remained with them beyond the time occupied by that special work.

revival. The first service of Pentecost, early in the morning—some time between six and nine o'clock—was just going on, or had just concluded, in the Temple, when a report was spread—"It was noised abroad[3]"—that something very strange and marvellous had occurred. The almost forgotten followers of the Crucified Jesus of Nazareth were said to have become all at once endowed with a power which it was quite certain (from their condition in life and general antecedents) that they had not previously possessed—the power of speaking in the many and various languages of the proselytes and foreign-born Jews "out of every nation under heaven," who were then dwelling during the time of the feast at Jerusalem. Astonished at this sound, or report, "the multitude came together," and subdued by the "marvellous sign" given for the conviction as well as the instruction of "them that believe not," they formed a great congregation around the twelve Apostles, perhaps in one of the outermost courts of the Temple; and there and then they drank in with eager ears that which the twelve founders of the Church had to speak to them concerning "the Man approved by God," and His wonderful resurrection from the dead "to be both Lord and Christ."

[3] Some think that the words "it was noised abroad," refer not to a report of what had happened spreading among the people; but to the "sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind," which they suppose to have been heard all over Jerusalem.

The result of this new "power" with which the Apostles were "endued from on high," was first of all to "confound"—that is, to astonish into a conviction of its supernatural character—those who listened to the words of the speakers. As Galileans the Apostles were known to be men who spoke an unrefined dialect; and as unlearned men they were known to be men who could not thus speak colloquially and intelligibly any language of any nation which happened to be there represented. The mere fact, therefore, was of itself calculated to convince those who witnessed and heard it that some power greater than that of man was moving in the matter, and that God Himself must be working among them. Then, while they were thus being brought to this conviction, the very plain and intelligible words which were spoken respecting the saving Person of Him whom so many thousands among them had seen, heard, and known, carried the conviction more home still: and when they had seen in its true light the guilt of crucifying the Lord of glory, they were pricked to the heart, and, bewildered with the thought that none were altogether free from that guilt, they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The decisive answer of the Apostles to this question is another proof of the Divine authority under which they acted, and of the fulness of the instructions which had been communicated to them as the ground of their

action. The questioners were to "repent"—repentance being their own part in what was to be done,—and to "be baptized"—baptism being the part which others were to take in the work: these two parts of the work blending together for one common object, "the remission of sins." Three thousand persons answered to this call of the Apostles, and were "added" to the body whereof the Apostles were members by the Sacrament of Baptism, which Christ had ordained to that end. And thus on that day, as the first fruits of the earthly harvest were brought to the Temple of God by the priests with thanksgiving, so were the first fruits of the heavenly harvest gathered into God's garner by the hands of the Apostles; the earliest yielding of that Corn of wheat which had been cast into the ground and died fifty days before, and which was now not abiding alone, but bearing much fruit to the praise and glory of God.

CHAPTER II.

THE INFANCY OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE machinery by means of which the first spread of the Gospel was effected was marvellously well adapted to the object for which it was intended. In Jerusalem itself, that is among the ordinary residents there, the sudden revival of the name of Jesus, and the re-awakening to energy of His followers, as well as the immense result of their influence in a single day, so that three thousand persons enrolled themselves of their body, all this must have come like a flash of lightning upon both rulers and people. One day there was a small sect of men in apparent prostration and suppression through the humiliating death of their leader; the next that sect had arisen in such power that it had been able to carry every thing before it. It was a sufficiently surprising revival to attract many to its side; and there seems ample proof that a much greater number of Jews than is commonly inferred were actually converted to

Christ in the very earliest days of the Apostles' work at Jerusalem.

§. *The Gift of Tongues.*

But the machinery more particularly alluded to is the gift of tongues, which was a means as well adapted to the diffusion of knowledge respecting the common object set forth by the Apostles, and to the binding together of the foundation stones of Christ's Church throughout the world, as the confusion of tongues was to prevent intercommunication respecting a common object, and to divide asunder those who had previously been united as one family.

Some have endeavoured to make out that the gift of tongues was a faculty bestowed upon those who received it of speaking in some mystical or ecstatic language, dissimilar from any of the languages ordinarily used by mankind; and St. Paul's well known references to "unknown tongues" have been supposed to countenance this belief. It is, however, clear that one chief object of the gift of tongues, at least on its first bestowal, was to give to the Apostles the ability to proclaim in the ears of those who were shortly about to diverge from Jerusalem into many and distant parts of a world otherwise unapproachable at present by the Apostles, the knowledge of Christ's death and resurrection and saving power. In the last century the notion was

started by a free-thinking clergyman named Middleton, that the object of the gift of tongues was only temporary, viz., for a sign to those present of the Divine mission of the speakers; and some in our time also endeavour to shew that it amounted to nothing more than a suddenly acquired power of uttering the praises of God in languages hitherto, and perhaps at the time of utterance, unknown to them. It is said also that there is no proof of the power being continued to the Apostles, or of their ever speaking to foreigners on subsequent occasions in the languages of such foreigners, unless they had learned those languages in the usual manner. But this is a notion contrary to the Christian belief of all ages, and there is far more reason to coincide with the common idea, than with that built upon Dr. Middleton's semi-infidel theories.

For the course of after events seems to make it clear that it was *necessary* to "endue" the Apostles with such a "power from on high," if they were to do the work appointed them. "Unlearned men" as they were, "Galileans," less educated than ordinary working Jews, they had to go forth to all nations of the world, to tell to them the story of Christ, and to lay down the principles of the new faith and the new morality of which He was the head. That such work should be carried on through the laborious process of interpretation by a third party seems in the last degree improbable, after the very men

who had to do it had once been endowed with this gift of tongues, even for an hour; and equally improbable that they should have been compelled to spend months and years on the acquisition of the languages spoken in the countries where they were to proclaim Christ. On the other hand, if we ask ourselves what was the first essential for men like the Apostles, receiving a commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, we should certainly answer that it would be a knowledge of the respective languages in which "every creature" was accustomed to speak, that the first impediment to communication with those who were to be communicated with might be at once removed. What modern missionaries, unendowed with miraculous gifts, and working within a sphere of contracted limits, do by human means and learning, that the Apostles, whose labours were to be co-extensive with the habitable world, and very rapid in their operations, did by means of a supernatural power, bestowed upon them from on high. And hence the nations of that age received the truths of the Gospel not in the uncertain and halting language of an interpreter, understanding imperfectly what was said by the speaker, and conveying his meaning in an impoverished form to the hearers, but with all the original force of the original thoughts, evolved from personal knowledge and burning zeal, and conveyed in language so strictly vernacular

that "every man heard in their own tongue, in which they were born," the story of God's wonderful works in the establishment of the Gospel upon earth.

But if such was the appropriateness of this gift with reference to the future work of the Apostles, it also fitted in, in the most striking manner, with their present position. A great opportunity lay immediately at the feet of this small band of men for making known to many nations the name of Jesus, and some fundamental portions of the Gospel, say, for example, the fact of the Resurrection,—without any delay, and without even travelling out of Jerusalem. "Devout Jews," some native Jews who had emigrated to foreign countries perhaps, but more, no doubt, the foreign-born descendants of those who had emigrated in previous generations, were now assembled in Jerusalem, and as soon as the marvellous story about what had happened in the upper chamber was reported abroad, they all came together to see and hear what they could, before they returned home again to their own distant countries. To these the Apostles spoke; and a large number, hearing to good purpose, were converted and baptized. They then found not only an immediate and growing nucleus of Christianity in Jerusalem; but each one, returning home, was a nucleus for his own nation, the "first love" and fervour of the earlier converts to Christianity being evidently

one means by which God's Providence led to the rapid increase of their numbers.

Now, some or all of the various nations then represented in Jerusalem are enumerated in the account given of this great event in the Acts of the Apostles. As one is almost sure to be disabused of the notion of "accident" on a close examination of any part of Holy Scripture, so there is evidence in this case that these nations are not set down fortuitously or at random, but that there is intention and design in naming them. They are, for example, named in a regular geographical order, beginning from the north-east, and going in a south-westerly direction; which was in fact the course that Christianity took in its spread. Those named are the Parthians; the Medes and Elamites, who appear to be the people spread over the various countries forming the north-east of the continent of Asia; the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and the proconsular province of Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, which together make up the north-western portion of the continent; in "Egypt and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene," which comprehend the then inhabited and civilized portions of Africa; "strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes," by whom we are probably to understand Roman citizens, born Jews or converted Jews, from distant countries, such as Gaul, Spain, or Britain; Cretes, who represent the islanders of the

Mediterranean; and Arabians, who are the inhabitants of the southern portion of Asia, not previously named.

Thus, on the very first day of the Church's existence, provision was made for sending forth a great multitude of missionaries immediately—missionaries, that is, not in the same sense as the Apostles, but men knowing the first principles of Christian doctrine, themselves Christians, and zealous to carry such knowledge to those at home. Probably, therefore, before ever an Apostle had travelled beyond the boundaries of Palestine, a foundation had been laid for the building up of their work in every important country of the world; a vast substratum prepared for Apostolic husbandry, like those "certain disciples" whom St. Paul found at Ephesus [1].

The most important part, then, of that Providential machinery which was ordained for establishing the Church throughout the world was the Gift of Tongues. It was probably bestowed upon the Apostles and others on such occasions as required communication to be established for missionary purposes between the Divine messenger and the unconverted heathen, and lasted during such a period as that every nation on the earth might have imparted to it the fundamental truths, at least, of Christianity. But it seems unlikely that it was

[1] Acts xix. 1—7.

bestowed upon any who lived beyond the Apostolic age, as we find no mention of it in Ecclesiastical History.

§. *The Power of Working Miracles.*

Another important part of that machinery was the "power from on high" by which the Apostles were endowed, more permanently than they had been during our Lord's life time, with the ability to work miracles, by means of which they at once gave evidence that they were "men sent of God" to those who might have been unwilling otherwise to receive them; by which also they were enabled to assert their authority, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and Elymas the sorcerer; and by which again they were enabled to draw the hearts of the people at large to Christ by "doing good," as He Himself had done, in restoring the sick to health and the dead to life.

§. *Extent of the Labours of the Apostles.*

The results which followed the first use by the Apostles of that power with which they were endowed may be traced out to some extent in the very condensed narrative with which we are furnished in the book of their Acts. Thus, on that very day, as many as *three thousand* were "added" to the fellowship of the Apostles by being baptized; and the conversions were not confined to that day, but, for some time to come, evidently, "the

Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." On another occasion (how long afterwards does not clearly appear) the Apostles Peter and John laid hold of the excitement caused by the healing of the impotent man to speak again to the people, and notwithstanding the opposition of "the priests, the captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees," "many of them which heard the Word believed, and the number of the men was about *five thousand.*" So many as eight thousand conversions in so short a time gives point to the words of the Sanhedrim, "that it spread no more among the people;" as does also the still further declaration[2] made by the historian after the death of Ananias and Sapphira, that "believers were the more added to the Lord, *multitudes* both of men and women."

These expressions refer to Jerusalem itself, and perhaps to a period of a very few days after the day of Pentecost. But without any of the Apostles preaching beyond the city their influence began immediately to be felt, for their numerous miracles were reported in the country adjacent, and there came "a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one."

Again, Christ's Gospel became popular, as it had been

[2] Acts v. 14.

in the week before the Crucifixion, when the people led Him in triumph to the Holy City; and so popular now that the most vigorous measures were taken by the Jewish rulers to suppress it; but taken in vain, God delivering the Apostles from prison by a miracle, and from death by the judicious speech of Gamaliel in the Sanhedrim. Thus it went on: "the number of the disciples was multiplied," "the Word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly;" and that not only among the poor, the uneducated, and more impressible classes, but "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Not without reason was it that St. Peter afterwards said to St. Paul at their first interview, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe."

All this was the direct result of Apostolic work in Jerusalem itself. At the death of Stephen, however, the circle began to grow wider, for although the Apostles did not leave the post of danger, the remainder of the Church —many thousands—were all scattered abroad throughout Judæa and the region of Samaria: Philip the deacon being the first, as it would seem, to fulfil the words of our Lord, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . . . in . . . . Samaria," and his ministry of Baptism as Deacon being followed by that of Confirmation at the hands of St. Peter and St. John, as Apostolic Bishops. This was the first occasion on which the Apostles began to exercise

their calling beyond the walls of Jerusalem, so far as the Scripture history shows: but the conversion of the eunuch seems to indicate that the preparation of Gentile lands for their ministry was still going on; and no doubt there is some truth in the old traditions which represent almost every man who was converted as this eunuch was, to have been the centre of a new mission, and often the subsequent bishop of the city to which he had first carried the knowledge of Christianity.

For some time the Apostles used no endeavours to convert any but Jews or Jewish proselytes to Christianity; not understanding fully the proclamation that Christ had come to be a "Light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as to be "the glory of God's people Israel." It does not seem likely, either, that any but those of the Jewish religion had—so far as the Apostles knew, for they did not know what was taking place under the influence of the Pentecostal converts—been numbered among the disciples of Christ: for even the eunuch of Queen Candace had "gone up to Jerusalem to worship," apparently in obedience to the Jewish law. It was by the conversion of Cornelius at the seaport town of Cæsarea, the port of communication between Jerusalem and the western Gentile world, that this truth was first brought fully to their knowledge. The Apostles appear to have become dispersed through Palestine at this time; for we read of St. Peter, that he had come first to

Lydda, near Joppa, after "having passed through all quarters," and that after converting many there and at Saron, he came to dwell at Joppa itself, another important seaport[3]. Others also, who had been scattered abroad on account of the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, crossing to the island of Cyprus, to which some of them belonged, and then returning to Antioch, where they began to proclaim the Gospel not only to Jews as hitherto, but also to the "Grecians" or heathen, of whom "a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord[4]." It was at Antioch that the great Gentile conversions of St. Paul began, St. Barnabas having gone to fetch him thither from Tarsus, apparently as being specially designated to the Apostles through Ananias, for "a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles." It was at Antioch, too, that the disciples of Christ were first called Christians: the reason appearing to be that hitherto they had all been Jews, and needed no other name; but now a distinctive appellation was necessary which should include both converted heathens and converted Jews, and mark them as followers of the same Christ.

The Apostles did not probably carry their ministrations

[3] It is observable that Philip was found at Azotus, a third seaport, as if the crisis at hand required the presence of special ministers at those towns most frequented by the heathen.

[4] Acts xi. 21.

beyond, or not much beyond, Palestine until about twelve years after the day of Pentecost; and the earliest of those ministrations is probably that for which St. Paul and St. Barnabas were "separated" by special command of the Holy Ghost, as told in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts. From this time the Scripture history of the Church gives us hardly any information about the work of the elder Apostles, the remainder of the Acts being chiefly the acts of St. Paul alone. As far as we can judge from other records, they laboured to a greater or less extent in every country of the known world; and nearly all died the death of martyrdom, far distant from the home which, as Galilæan peasants, they seemed so little likely ever to have quitted. Of the extent of their labours, except in the case of St. Paul, very little indeed is known, but that they were especially raised up for the purpose of *making an offer of Christianity to every separate race of men then existing;* and that by the Providence of God they remained at their work until it was fully performed. There were cases, no doubt, in which that offer was either rejected, or received with cold and unwilling minds, just as their Master was sometimes, even in His Omnipotence, "not able to do many mighty works," in one place and another, "because of their unbelief," whom He would have blessed by His ministrations.

Traces, more or less clear, are however to be found of their labours in the following districts of the world, viz.:

1. Syria,—e.g., Jerusalem, Samaria, Cæsarea, Lydda, Saron, Joppa, Antioch, Damascus.
2. Arabia.
3. Cyprus, and other islands in the Mediterranean.
4. Asia Minor,—e. g., Tarsus, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, &c.
5. Europe.—Italy, Greece, Macedonia, Dalmatia.
6. Africa.—Egypt, Libya or North Africa.
7. Asia.—Parthia, India, Malabar (still tracing up to St. Thomas), Chaldea, Mesopotamia.
8. Europe.—Russia and Northern Europe, Spain, France, Britain.

§. *Nature of the Labours of the Apostles.*

Before ending the subject of Apostolic labours, something should be said by way of pointing out their nature. The phrase "preaching the Gospel," is somewhat indefinite, and it can certainly be rightly understood only if we take it in a comprehensive sense; as including, that is, all the work which we find the Apostles doing in the Scriptural record of their labours. This work was by no means of an indefinite character; for it may be readily classified under five principal heads, as follows:—

I. The *Conversion* of large numbers of persons, Jews and Gentiles. For this object, the Apostles were endowed with the power of speaking foreign languages

miraculously, and of working miracles. (1) Their preaching was in itself of a forcible character, and often, if not always, inspired. This preaching alone was enough to win over multitudes to Christ, as is evident from the Scriptural narrative. (2) This forcible preaching was sometimes made still more effective by the exercise of the gift in the mother-tongue of the hearers, when that language had not been acquired by the preachers in any human way. (3) It had the additional witness of miracles, wrought both as works of mercy, and also as evidences of the divine mission and authority given to those by whom they were wrought. And thus the building up of the Church by the Apostolic ministry did not consist in the gradual conviction of individuals, soul by soul. Here and there such cases occurred, doubtless, as in that of the Philippian gaoler, though even he was not alone in his conversion; but these were exceptional, seeming to prove that few could withstand the presence of the Church face to face in those days of its highest converting power; and the general work of the Apostles was that of convincing whole multitudes at once that Christ was their Saviour, and of persuading them to receive Him.

II. The *Baptism* of the multitudes so converted was another part of the labours of the Apostles, as we find in the case of the three thousand who were converted on the day of Pentecost, in the case of the Samaritans converted

by Philip the Deacon, and in that of the household and friends of Cornelius.

III. The *Confirmation* of the baptized was a third portion of those labours, illustrations of which may be found in the confirmation of the Samaritans by St. Peter and St. John [5], and in some of St. Paul's pastoral visits [6].

IV. *Ordination* of ministers to continue the work of the Church was a fourth. In Acts vi. 1—6, we have an account of the ordination of *Deacons* by the Apostles. In Acts xiv. 23, and Titus i. 5, reference is made to the ordination of *Presbyters or Priests* [7]. And in the case of Titus, who was Bishop of Crete; Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus; and Epaphroditus, Bishop of Philippi, we see instances of *Bishops* ordained to their office by the Apostles.

V. The *Discipline of the Church* was exercised by the Apostles in person wherever they were present, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and others; sometimes by letter, as in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians; and on some occasions it appears to have been exercised by them collectively, as when the so-called Council of Jerusalem was held respecting the doubts as to the

[5] Acts viii. 17. [6] Ibid. xiv. 22.

[7] The transition forms of this word are, Presbyter, Prester, Prest (probably pronounced Prēst), and Priest. The corresponding change of Episcopus into the French Evesque—Evêque, and English Biscop—Bishop, is well known.

necessity of Jewish customs being imposed on Gentile Christians.

Thus the work of the Apostles may be said to have consisted chiefly in exercising the extraordinary and supernatural gifts bestowed upon them for the wholesale conversion of the world to Christianity; and in exercising the ordinary gifts which were given to them as the first bishops of the Church in, (1) confirming Christians, and (2) perpetuating a ministry for the continuation of their labours. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, in A.D. 70, it is probable that all the Apostles, except St. John, had finished their work on earth, and entered into the joy of their Lord; but St. John lived on to the end of the first century, being stationed during the greater part of the latter half at Ephesus, the great port of communication between Asia and Europe, and the great stronghold of anti-Christian philosophy and idolatry. It may be considered, therefore, that about thirty or forty years were occupied by the Apostles in founding the Church of Christ. They began by planting the new society in the streets of Jerusalem, and in the courts of the Temple; they gradually extended their circle of operations to the adjacent country, to Samaria, to the more distant parts of Syria, to the Mediterranean, to Asia Minor, to Europe, and to Africa; and when they ended their own personal work, there was hardly a region of the known earth which had not been

made aware that a Saviour had come into the world, and which had not had planted among its inhabitants those means of grace by which salvation itself might be received through that Saviour. All the work of the Church in subsequent ages has been simply to add on to the work of the Apostles; to join souls to that mystical Body which they, in Christ's name and power, originated; to extend the society which they founded, so that no generation should ever be without its presence among them; to go on doing, by those ordinary powers which generation after generation of the Church's ministers hands down to its successors, that work which the Apostles did with a marvellous rapidity and to a marvellous extent, because they were assisted by power that was extraordinary and miraculous.

There is no other example in history of any human society so originating, being so spread throughout the world, or enduring in unbroken continuity through so long a period of time.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM.

When Christianity was born into the world, it did not come upon a field entirely unoccupied by religious systems. On the contrary, it came face to face first of all with Judaism, the living parts of which it soon absorbed into its own substance; and then with Paganism, with which it had to carry on a fierce struggle for the greater part of three centuries. Of the opposition offered to Christianity by the Jews much need not be said, except in so far as it mixed itself up, as it invariably did, with the opposing powers of Paganism; but of that offered by the latter, a great deal must be said; for it forms the most important feature in the early history of Christianity next to the first foundation of the Church in the Apostolic age.

§. *The Causes of the Struggle.*

Before going into the historical question, however, it

is necessary to get some clear idea of what this Paganism was, between which and the religion of Christ there was so deadly a struggle for supremacy.

The more we elucidate old world history, the more certainly we find that there never was any nation that had not some recognized national religion. The heart of nations seeks after God as the heart of each individual man does. As, that is, the heart of a man makes him conscious of human dependency and human inferiority, and sends him aspiring after One greater than himself, to Whom he may bow down, and on Whom he may rest, so has it ever been with collective bodies of men. They have sought, "if haply they might feel after God, and find Him." Only here and there has even an individual existed who altogether comes up to the picture of the Atheist given in the Psalms, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God;" while a *nation* of Atheists, so far as history tells us, has never existed from the foundation of the world.

We must not, therefore, quite confound Paganism and Atheism. There were Atheists in the midst of Pagans, as there are Atheists in the midst of Christians; but (setting aside the question whether Paganism naturally produces Atheism) they were external to, and distinct from, the system in the one case as in the other; Atheism being a rejection of Paganism as it is a rejection of Christianity. Paganism is, in fact, a name for (1) the

mixed and manifold religion which worshipped God, but did it in a false and unlawful manner; or (2) for that which, seeking to worship God, worshipped only that which falsely pretended to be God; that which, in reality, was only either a mere imagination, or else some animal or thing, belonging to God's creation.

But in describing Paganism thus, we are describing it in the abstract. View it from this point of view, and Paganism, whether in the form of actual idolatry, or of philosophical mysticism, may seem little more than a mistake of well-meaning, but through some cause or other, wrong-headed, generations of men. Look at it, however, in its practical working, and we shall find that Paganism was much more than a mistake: that it was, in fact, mixed up with abominations and iniquities which show that however its origin might be veiled and disguised, it was indeed an offspring of hell and not of heaven. God has always had a kingdom in the world—a kingdom of patriarchal religion, a kingdom of Jewish polity, a kingdom of Christianity; and to this kingdom Paganism has always been positively and unmistakably opposed. The one has ever been a kingdom of light, and truth, and moral virtue; the other a kingdom of vice, falsehood, and darkness. The one as much the kingdom of the evil one, as the other the kingdom of God.

Let there be no mistake about this. Let us understand that there are no terms that can be too strong for

the condemnation of Paganism, though there were many who grew up good under its vile shadow in spite of its evil substance. The prophecies of the Old Testament were written when this kingdom of Satan was in its hey-day of prosperity, and they contain language as strong in condemnation of it as any which pen could write: we cannot, therefore, be far wrong if we follow in their wake as to principle, though we may not be called upon to use the same kind of condemnatory language. We must regard Paganism, then, when we regard it as a whole, in the same light as we regard all other works of the devil—theft, adultery, murder, or any other sin: and a nation or tribe utterly given up to it must be looked upon as the slaves of Satan in as unmitigated a sense as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were, or as the Thugs of modern India are his slaves.

When, therefore, we talk of Pagan opposition to Christianity, let us take care to guard against the view originated by Gibbon and his followers. It was not a contest between two religions which have a common foundation, and each of which is worthy of respect; but between two which were built up *ab initio* from foundations entirely distinct, and only one of which deserves our reverence. It was not an unreasonable war between parties who, if they had been more reasonable, might have been friends; but it was one campaign of that war which is still going on, and will not yet cease, the war

between two sides whose opposite principles and intentions make it impossible for them ever to be reconciled; a campaign in the war of many campaigns between the religion of God and the religion of God's Foe. Hence there was a reality in this struggle, an intense reality, far beyond any thing which belongs to a mere opposition of opinions. Instead of considering it as only this, we must rather view it as an endeavour on the part of the great unseen enemy of the truth to maintain a system of false worship and false religion, because that was the way by which he could maintain supremacy over the largest number of men's souls. No doubt, his devices vary in different ages according to the varying habits and the varying thought which are current among mankind. Paganism was a device which had proved successful in propagating iniquity for many ages, and it was not in the nature of the case that its influence over men should be yielded up without a fierce contest.

§. *The Religious System of the Roman Empire.*

At the period when Christianity began to extend itself beyond Palestine, the Roman Empire had gathered into itself all the civilized world except India and China, and as we have no historical evidence of the extension of Apostolic labours to China, and little as to the primitive Christianity of India, we may for our present purpose assume the Roman Empire to have been the real battle-field

of Paganism and Christianity. Let us, therefore, sketch out in a few words what was the quasi-religious condition of the civilized world, or of that portion of it of which we know any thing at the period when the strife began.

A necessary part of the Roman policy was that of tolerating every form of religion which was found established among the conquered nations under their sway, provided that religion was not inconsistent with those relations between the conquerors and the conquered which were necessary for the maintenance of their power by the former. Hence we find the Jews exercising their religion in the time of our Lord without any restraint, so long as it was not made the pretext for rebellion to Roman authority. And so also in other portions of the Empire the local idolatries were rarely interfered with; the Druidism of unconquered Britain, for example, continuing to prevail when the land was subdued by the Roman legions, and other local forms of Paganism in other countries being persecuted only when socially or politically troublesome. But with the more intellectual and educated subjects of the Empire, and wherever the influence of Rome itself was much felt, the external idolatry of Pagan systems had become little more than the recognized public religion of the State, conformity to which was kept up merely on the ground of order and social propriety; the more real and ruling principles of life being found in certain systems of

philosophy which had grown up among the Greeks, and had extended their influence over all the higher classes among the Romans. Thus the Paganism of the civilized world at the time when it stood opposed to Christianity was partly a system of mere idolatry, the worship of things that were not God; and partly this combined with philosophical principles which were more attractive than mere idolatry could be to educated minds. These philosophical principles were developed out of three systems which had their origin among a people who were highly civilized, and acute thinkers, when the Romans themselves were in their infancy. First in order, though latest in time, the Stoics must be noticed; the same sect of philosophers who are mentioned in Acts xvii. 18, "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the *Stoics* encountered" St. Paul at Athens. The sect originated in the city where they encountered the Apostle, about 300 years before, in the teaching of Zeno, and took its name from the Stoa, a porch or cloister, in which Zeno originally inculcated his tenets. About 100 years before St. Paul's visit to Rome these tenets had been introduced there also: and one of the most eminent of the Roman Stoics, Seneca, is thought to have been an acquaintance of the Apostle. Stoical theories resolved themselves into a kind of natural religion, which set up virtue as the highest object of life, and accounted the endurance of suffering as the highest form of virtue. It

was a sort of theory out of which a great deal of something like Christian practice might have come; and after Christianity had spread its influence over the world, some of the Stoics, as for example Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor, seem to have been as good men as heathens could be. But, by itself, Stoicism was a very lifeless sort of religion, if religion it can be called, well characterized by Pope in the couplet—

> "In lazy apathy let Stoics boast
> Their virtue fix'd,—'tis fix'd as in a frost."

And practically the Stoics lived pretty much as they felt inclined to live, without any very strict reference to their philosophy about virtue; and their theory about endurance of suffering, often led them to suicide as the easiest way of escaping it; of which Zeno himself, as well as Cato and Seneca in later times, are notable examples.

The Epicureans took their name from Epicurus, another Athenian philosopher, who preceded Zeno by about a century. The doctrines which he originally taught are hardly known, though he seems to have been severe in his own life, and to have inculcated severity on his disciples. His name, however, has become for ages the by-word for all sorts of self-indulgence; and the representatives of his system at the time when Christianity came upon the field, were such persons as the sensual Horace and the people of Pompeii. Many of the later Romans belonged to this grossly

profligate and sensual system, the "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" school of philosophy; and perhaps "society" in the times which preceded the triumph of Christianity was more Epicurean than any thing else.

As a religion—to speak in paradox—Epicurism was mere Atheism, in practice, if not in theory. The highest idea of the gods which this philosophy entertained was that they had always lived lives of unalloyed and idle pleasure; and the highest life they looked to live themselves was—

> "To live and lie reclined
> On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind."

The Epicurean was in fact an extreme example of the selfish man, who is to his own mind the centre of the universe, and who is indifferent to all around him except so far as it ministers to his own gratification.

Lastly, there were the Academics or Platonists, the oldest sect of all, and the most enduring. Plato was a follower of Socrates, and was a teacher of philosophy among the Greeks about 400 years before the Day of Pentecost. Plato added to the strong common sense of Socrates a deep insight into the real philosophy of human nature and of religion. His followers were the most intellectual of all the heathen, and generally numbered those great men among them who laid the foundation of Roman political power, as those of

Epicurus were the cause of its decline. Cicero, for example, was one of the Academics. But in Cicero we may observe how the religious philosophy of Plato was developed by many of his followers into a mere scepticism, which conformed to every thing outwardly, but believed nothing inwardly. Too noble to fall into the vices of the Epicurean system, they were not noble enough to see that there is a high philosophy which can believe in a world unseen, while it yet busies itself earnestly and practically with the life by which it is surrounded.

And thus, as mere idolatrous Paganism left its followers open to every kind of sin, and even encouraged them in it (as is well known) by their abominable sensual "mysteries," in which the heathen ritual was simply a rule and injunction for the grossest immorality under the pretence of worshipping such impure imaginations as the goddess Venus; so philosophical heathenism either came down sooner or later to the same level, or else left its disciples mere men of the world, to whom principles of morality and religion were mere questions of inclination and form. There was little either in the literal idolatry of Paganism, or in its more subtle philosophical systems which would not inevitably array itself against the spread of Christianity when once the principles of that novel religion became known for what they were.

§. *The Progress of the Contest.*

Having thus shown what the religion of Paganism was (in the Roman world at least, for of China and India in those days we know hardly any thing, and elsewhere there was nothing but mere savage idolatry), we may now go on to trace out the course of that antagonism which thus inevitably sprung up, and which has been denominated the struggle between Christianity and Paganism.

The earliest direct conflict between Christians and heathens arose out of alleged disturbances of which the former were accused; and we see something of this so early as the time of which the Acts form a partial history. Thus, at Iconium[1], "the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil-affected against the brethren," so that Paul and the rest had to fly for their lives out of the city to Lystra; and there he was pursued by the same persecuting faction, who succeeded in stirring up the mob to stone the Apostle until he was supposed to be dead, though the particular charge made against him does not appear. Shortly afterwards, however, a somewhat similar occurrence took place at Thessalonica[2], when the Jews got together a mob, "certain lewd fellows of the baser

[1] Acts xiv. 1—6. [2] Acts xvii. 5.

sort," and made a distinct charge against the Apostles and Jason their host, whom alone they had been able to apprehend. The charge in this case was one of sedition, or rebellion against the Roman authority—a similar accusation to that brought against our Lord when before Pilate. "These that have turned the world upside down," the Jews exclaimed to the Roman rulers of the city, "are come hither also . . . . and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus." Bitter as the hatred was which the Jews entertained towards their Roman conquerors, it was not so bitter as that which they felt towards Christians, and they could be loyal for the moment for the sake of exciting the Roman power against them[3]. On other occasions less crafty assaults were made on them by the Jews, as at Corinth, where Gallio, the Roman pro-consul, would have nothing to do with the questions of Jewish faith on which St. Paul had been attacked, and drove Jews and Christians

[3] The extreme exclusiveness of the Jews in respect to religion was the cause of their enmity against Christianity. The point is well illustrated by their reception of St. Paul's speech to them at Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 22). They listened to him with comparative patience until he spoke of the admission of the Gentiles to the fellowship of the one kingdom—"they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the face of the earth; for it is not fit that he should live." The Governor of Jerusalem might well be puzzled and embarrassed by such exclamations.

indiscriminately away from the judgment-seat[4]. The scarcely so astute judgment of the Roman authorities at Jerusalem, who were doubtful whether the Apostle was not really a sedition-monger[5], led to those entanglements which caused St. Paul to appeal to Cæsar as the ultimate authority, and thus to bring about his first long imprisonment at Rome.

The conduct of Gallio in refusing to enter into any question of religion was characteristic of the Roman system under which conquered provinces were governed, and to which allusion has already been made. But this indifference often led to a great injustice towards the Christians, as it prevented the ruling powers from distinguishing between them and the really seditious and rebellious Jews. Thus, it is pretty certain that when the Emperor Claudius issued his edict commanding all Jews to depart from Rome, Christians were exiled as well, at least, if they belonged to the Jewish nation. Hence, probably, the presence of Aquila and Priscilla (who were certainly Christians) at Corinth on the occasion of the riot before Gallio. And hence too, the confusion of mind which has led Suetonius, the Roman historian, to record that the Jews were driven out of Rome on this occasion because they had raised an insurrection at the instigation of one

[4] Acts xviii. 15. [5] Acts xxi. 38.

Chrestus[6]; a Christian insurrection being in the last degree improbable, as any one must see who reads the better informed histories of their conduct in these early times.

Whatever the causes, it is, however, certain that the Roman authorities were not long before they were brought into direct conflict with Christianity, and the incidents related in the Scripture history of the Church indicate the beginning of the outburst of outward persecution which ran side by side with the more subtle supernatural opposition of Satan, exercised by such men as the sons of Sceva, the apostate high priest of Diana, the soothsaying woman, Elymas the sorcerer, Simon Magus, and Apollonius of Tyanæa; and of which we have less prominent records. And as Christianity grew stronger, so the opposition to it strengthened in proportion. These supernatural agents endeavoured to put down the Church by pretending to rival its mighty works, as well as by combating its principles, but the attempt failed in the end as signally as the attempt of the Egyptian magicians to rival Moses in his miracles. Then the antagonism took the form of an

[6] Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit. —Suæton. Claud. xxv. 12. This expulsion of the Jews from Rome happened nine years after the death of Christ. It is just possible that some pretended Messiah appeared among the Roman Jews at this time, and did really instigate their rebellion. Many such appear to have arisen.

attempt at extermination by fierce and general persecution, the wholesale slaughter of all owning the name of Christian, who could possibly be laid hold of.

This first approach to a general struggle on the part of Paganism to regain its ancient supremacy began at Rome, in the reign of the Emperor Nero, and in the year of our Lord 64. This Emperor was a weak and ill-trained young man (though the pupil of Seneca), raised to the throne by accident rather than right, at first enslaved by an ambitious and unprincipled mother, and afterwards aided in his wickedness by his shameless and profligate wife Poppœa. In the year 64 a great fire consumed a large portion of Rome, destroying property and works of art of enormous value, and causing great loss as well as vexation to the Romans. Nero himself is said to have been the incendiary by two historians, Dion and Suetonius; a report to the same effect is mentioned by Tacitus; and the fact recorded by all three, that he accused the Christians of causing the fire, is usually and very reasonably taken as evidence that he was so, and that he was endeavouring to screen himself from the indignation of the citizens by turning it against others. Tacitus wrote his annals about thirty years after this time, and while many were living who had witnessed the scenes which followed this accusation of the Christians by Nero; and as the historian speaks very unfavourably of them, it is not likely that he has

exaggerated the account of their sufferings. He says that those sufferings were made the subject of public spectacles in Nero's gardens (now the Vatican), which he offered for public use on the occasion. Some were sewn in the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs; some were crucified, some burnt to death, some smeared over with inflammable substances, and used as living torches to light up the gardens after dark[7].

It was in the course of this persecution, and at Rome, in the year 65, that the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul were crowned with martyrdom; St. Peter being probably one of those who were "crucibus affixi" (but head downwards, at his own request), in those very gardens of Nero; and St. Paul suffering the quicker and less shameful death of decapitation, because he was a "freeborn Roman," and not, as his fellow-martyr, one of a conquered nation. For four years, in Rome and in the provinces, this violent attack on Christianity lasted. How many of the "noble army of martyrs" were then enrolled in its ranks, it is quite impossible to say, but it is probable that several of the Apostles went their way

[7] "Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti, laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque ubi defecisset dies in usum nocturni luminis urerentur. Hortos suos ei spectaculo Nero obtulerat." . . . . Tacitus, Annal. xv. 44. Compare Heb. x. 32, 33, and 1 Cor. iv. 9. It almost seems as if Nero's persecution was not the first occasion on which Christians were made "gazing-stocks" at a public "spectacle."

to the mansions prepared for them by Him who had gone the way of martyrdom before to do so; and it is almost certain that this was the time when St. Mark was dragged over the pavement till he died, in the city of Alexandria; while the names of the martyrs Gervase and Protasius, who suffered at Milan, indicate the progress of the persecution towards the west.

Nero died in the year 68, and with him the troubles of these terrible days passed away, no general persecution of Christians occurring again for about twenty-seven years. During that time are reckoned up the short reigns of the Emperors Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, with those of Vespasian and Titus (under whom Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70), and the beginning of the reign of Domitian, who assumed the Imperial purple in 81. It is usual to reckon ten periods of persecution, at various intervals from the time of Nero to that of Constantine, and that under Domitian is thus the second. But this enumeration is more convenient than exact, and there is no particular reason why we should retain it in our present account of those times. It is certain, however, that there was no general persecution of Christians by the Roman Government from the time of Nero to that of Domitian, and that under the latter cruel Emperor some of the horrors which had taken place a quarter of a century before were repeated upon another generation of martyrs. What immediately provoked the Em-

peror's cruel disposition against his Christian subjects is not clear, but the provocation seems to have been in some way connected with his domestic relations, as the first victims of the persecution were his cousin Flavius Clemens, whom he put to death, and the wife of Clemens, Flavia Domitilla, who was banished to Pandataria. An inscription was discovered in excavating under the Church of St. Clement, at Rome, in 1725, which gave to Flavius Clemens the honour of martyrdom. He was consul at the time, and was put to death for refusing to acknowledge the Roman gods; the historian Dion Cassius stating that Clemens, and many others who went over to the Jewish superstition, were executed for the crime of Atheism, both of these being terms then applied to Christianity by the heathen.

According to ancient writers, it was Domitian who summoned St. John from Ephesus to Rome, and there cast him into a caldron of boiling oil; when the Apostle came out unscathed, banishing him to the isle of Patmos. There is some evidence, however, to show that the Book of the Revelation was written in the time of Nero, thirty years before, and as it was written at Patmos, either the two circumstances occurred at an earlier period than the persecution of Domitian, or at different times in the Apostles' long life, which seems the more likely supposition [8].

[8] The ancient Syriac version of the Apocalypse (which is probably older than the date of Jerome, who first records St. John's banishment

Of the details of the persecution under Domitian we have no knowledge, but his reputation for cruelty (which was so great that his very name was odious to the Romans), the fact stated by the heathen Dion, that many were executed for Jewish superstition, and the general assertions of Christian writers who lived near to his time, sufficiently prove that the spirit of Paganism was once more let loose upon Christianity, and made another vigorous attempt to annihilate it.

We need not go through the historical details which exist respecting the remaining periods of intense and violent struggle for ascendancy on the part of Paganism, but may now take two, as illustrating its progress, the one a period belonging to the time of Trajan, and illustrating the principles on which politic men of the world helped forward the persecuting work of Paganism; and the other to the time of Diocletian, when wholesale slaughter was the result of a mere rabid spirit of deadly anti-Christianism. The first period ranges from A.D. 104 to A.D. 117, immediately succeeding the conclusion of the Apostolic age; the second from A.D. 303 to A.D. 313, that immediately preceding the establishment of Christianity as the State religion of Rome.

by Domitian), has for its title "The Revelation which was made by God to John the Evangelist in the Isle of Patmos, to which he was banished by the Emperor Nero." Tertullian mentions both the attempted martyrdom and the banishment, but gives no indication of the date.

§. *Political Opposition to Christianity illustrated.*

The Emperor Trajan, who reigned from A.D. 98 to A.D. 117, was one of the best of all the heathen Cæsars, a really great ruler, and probably as little chargeable as any of the Emperors with the worse vices of Paganism. Yet he was a systematic, though not a cruel opponent of Christianity, representing exactly the position which the Roman Empire might have been expected to take up in respect to it. As already mentioned, it was the rule to tolerate all religions as far as possible; that is, so long as they did not interfere with the authority of the conquerors. Christianity differed, however, from all religions which had been so tolerated hitherto in several fundamental particulars.

1. It was not a religion belonging to any one nation, or confined to any special locality, or claiming respect from its antiquity. There was, on the contrary, no religion so novel, nor any which made such claims of universality, nor any which was in fact, as well as in theory, spread throughout so many regions of the Empire. This universality only met with a parallel in that of the Empire itself; and there is little ground for wonder when we find some of the Emperors imagining that the Christian kingdom was set up as an actual rival to the Imperial authority; doing "contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus."

2. Christianity opposed all other religions previously known in the world, whether established by authority or only tolerated. It is an essential principle of Christianity that itself alone is true, and that all professing religion which is not itself is false. It offers no toleration as to principles, though it is not in practice persecuting. It spoke out boldly about Paganism, declaring that idols were but stocks and stones; that creatures were worshipped in the place of the Creator; that Paganism was a system of gross darkness and wickedness, and itself alone a system of light and holiness. To men whose minds failed to receive this dogmatic self-assertion as true, it must have been intolerable; and its bold intolerance of error must have been in no small degree a provocative of practical intolerance towards it on the part of those who mistook error for truth, and the one true system for error.

3. Christians were especially tenacious of their creed, and provoked opposition and persecution by what to them was a vital necessity, but what seemed to the heathen mere obstinacy. The particular "Test Act" of the Empire, under which so many Christians suffered, was the law which compelled all persons, when required, to sacrifice a few grains of incense to the "Numen Imperatoris," the genius of the Emperor. Both Pagans and Christians looked upon this ceremony as one by which Divine honour was given to the Emperor; and

while it was enjoined by the civil authority as little more than a test of loyalty, it was, of course, considered as rank idolatry by Christians. Hence they were called "Irreligiosi ad Cæsares," and looked upon both as seditious and atheistical; irrationally opposed to the rules and traditions by which the Empire maintained its authority, and its hold upon all its subjects.

Thus the conservative instincts of rulers like Trajan, or like Marcus Aurelius, were all enlisted against the innovating principles which were, to their view, the most conspicuous features of Christianity. What is most to be marvelled at is that they did not make themselves better acquainted with what the new system really was, and that they were so content to rest in the merest superficial knowledge of its principles. Nor does it add to our respect for them that they took such strong action as they did towards large numbers of Christians without that further inquiry which ought to have seemed the very first necessity of justice to a really just ruler. There were those among the Emperors and statesmen of the Empire who could soon have detected the vast contrast between the novel morality of a pure and spiritual system like Christianity and the abominable ethics of a degraded and sensual Paganism; and one marvels at the apathy which kept them so blind and ignorant when the means for obtaining knowledge and evidence were

so near at hand as to be available even within the range of their domestic households.

The present portion of the question before us is well illustrated by the often quoted correspondence between Trajan and the younger Pliny, while the latter was pro-consul of Bithynia and Pontus. Pliny and the Emperor were constant correspondents for many years, and a large number of their letters are preserved, from which it appears that when both were in high office, it was the habit of the pro-consul to ask the advice and wishes of the Emperor by letter, when any unusually difficult matter came before him in the course of his official duties. The substance of Pliny's letter on the subject of Christians is as follows:—

He had never been present at the resolutions taken concerning the Christians, and therefore did not feel confident as to the course he ought to take in dealing with them, or to what extent they were to be considered as deserving of punishment. Pliny had especially felt hesitation, he tells Trajan, on two points, first, whether all, irrespective of age or sex, were to be punished equally; and secondly, whether those who renounced Christianity were yet to suffer as Christians.

The pro-consul then goes on to describe his manner of dealing with the accused when they were brought before him. Putting the question to them, Whether they were Christians? if they acknowledged themselves to be so,

he repeated the inquiry three times, cautioning them that they would be punished if they still persisted in declaring so; and if they did so persist (unless they were Roman citizens, when he sent them to Rome) he punished them with death. Anonymous informations were, however, laid against some persons who denied that they were or ever had been Christians, and showed by their actions that they certainly were not so now, and these the pro-consul liberated. The chief difficulty which he felt was in the case of those who confessed that they had been Christians formerly, but denied being so now; and who excused their former conduct by revealing Christian usages, such as the singing of hymns to Christ, and the celebration of the Holy Sacrament. After recapitulating in his own way what they had thus told him, Pliny adds, that he thought it better to torture two of their deaconesses (!!), that he might find out the real secrets of the Christian superstition, but that he had discovered nothing fresh by this means. And then he concludes his letter by assuring the Emperor that if all are punished, who are guilty of being Christians, the number will become very serious, and involve danger to the province; whereas if milder measures are used, he believes that many may be won back to their old (Pagan) religion.

The answer of the Emperor Trajan was that of a wise and not unfeeling heathen, but he took no trouble to inquire—or, at least, there is no evidence that he did—

whether Christianity was good or bad, concluding at once that it was the latter, and that it was dangerous to the State.

"You have done quite right, my dear Secundus," he wrote, "in examining the cases of the Christians brought before you. In such a case as this, no general rule, applicable to all, can be laid down. The Christians must not be sought after. If they are brought before you, and properly convicted, they must be executed; but with this reservation, that if any of them should renounce Christianity, and prove his renunciation of it by invocations to our gods, his repentance must entitle him to pardon, however he may have been suspected before. But in no case ought anonymous information to be acted upon, for such a precedent would not only be dangerous, but quite contrary to the equity of my government."

If this letter of Trajan's changed the general policy of the provincial rulers towards Christians, as some historians believe, their case before must have been that of persons beyond the protection of the law, and liable to death at the anonymous accusation of any enemy. Yet Trajan, mild as he was compared with Nero and Domitian, was a personal persecutor of Christians; and one instance may be given, both that the inherent cruelty of Pagan opposition to Christianity may be illustrated, and also as being in itself a beautiful tale of Christian heroism and suffering.

§. *A Martyrdom.*

About the year 107 Trajan came to Antioch, on his way to Armenia and Parthia, against which he was organizing an expedition. There was an old Christian saint at Antioch named Ignatius, who had been bishop there for nearly forty years, and whom the tradition of later ages declares to have been the child taken into His arms by our Lord, when He said, "Whosoever receiveth this little child in My name receiveth Me." Whether he was so or not, he had been bishop there almost from the time when St. Peter lived in the city. As soon as the Emperor arrived at Antioch, there seems to have been either a sudden alarm, or an actual commencement of persecution; and as was not unfrequent in those days, the aged bishop practically interpreted the saying of our Lord, "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," by appearing before the Emperor, and endeavouring, by his own submission to martyrdom, to draw off attention from his flock, and so save their lives. Trajan himself examined the aged saint, accusing him of wickedness in professing a religion contrary to the commands of Cæsar, and in persuading others to do so to their destruction. The old man claimed the name of Theophorus, or God-bearer, and said that since he bore Christ within him—so clear was the faith of Christians then in such words as, "stronger is He that is in you than he that is in the

world"—since Christ was in him, wicked spirits had departed from him, and he ought not to be called after such a manner for refusing to worship those false gods which were nothing else than wicked spirits. When Trajan asked him who Theophorus was, Ignatius answered that it was he who bore Christ in his breast; and when Trajan answered by claiming to have the gods within him too, who were helping him to overcome his enemies, the Bishop boldly bore witness that "there is but one God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that are in them; and one Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son, whose kingdom may I enjoy." Trajan knew the story of our Lord, at least of His death, and asked, "His kingdom, do you say, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?" and again, "Dost thou carry then Him who was crucified within thee?" and when Ignatius once more answered, "I do, for it is written, I will dwell in them, and walk in them," the Emperor pronounced his condemnation as having confessed himself a disciple of the Crucified One, and commanded that he should be taken to Rome, there to be thrown to the beasts, for the entertainment of the people. The holy man heard his sentence, and cried out, "I thank thee, O Lord, that Thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love toward Thee; and hast made me to be put into iron bonds with Thine Apostle Paul."

It was a very weary journey for an old man to take on foot, all along the shores of Asia Minor across the broad part of what is now Turkey in Europe, to the town of Epidamnus, now called Durazzo, on the western coast, and thence by ship to the mouth of the Tiber, and up the river to Rome. How long it took we are not told, but Ignatius was so old and harmless that the ten soldiers who had charge of him were forced to make it as easy as they could, and rested for some time at towns on their way. When at Smyrna the old Bishop wrote letters—his dying Epistles, like St. Paul's "I am now ready to be offered," or St. Peter's "Shortly I must put off this my tabernacle,"—to the Roman and five other Churches, who had sent to give him all they could, their loving sympathy, and whom he specially exhorted not to make any attempt to rescue him. At Smyrna he met Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom about fifty years afterwards when still older than Ignatius: and after he had rested enough to gain strength for another stage, the soldiers led him on to Troas, where he was comforted with the good news that no further persecution had taken place at Antioch since he had left, and that therefore the purpose of his surrender had been answered. Two deacons were allowed to accompany him all the way, and at last landed with him at the mouth of the Tiber, and walked by his side to Rome; Ignatius

regretting that his foot-sore journey could not be prolonged by taking the road from Puteoli, near Naples, along which St. Paul himself had gone to Rome under similar circumstances. In spite of the dangers which open sympathy with a condemned Christian must have entailed, the journey of the well-known old Bishop of Antioch was almost a triumph—a Palm Sunday preceding his Good Friday—the whole way. And neither the warmth of friends, nor this prolongation of the pain and expectation of martyrdom daunted him. "Whether fire, or the cross, or the assault of wild beasts await me, let all come," said he, "so that I may gain Christ." There must have been a very short time to wait after he came to Rome. On December 20th, 107, a great festival was held, called the Sigillaria, the latter days of the great autumn Carnival, and the people were collected in the Flavian Amphitheatre (now called the Coliseum) to witness the athletic sports, races, and gladiatorial fights in which the Romans so delighted. It was made known that the Emperor had sent them a prisoner for higher sport, and there rose an impatient cry of "Christians to the Lions," as a signal for him to be brought out. Then this white-haired and harmless old man of eighty or more was led into the midst of the arena, and torn to pieces by the uncaged beasts before the eyes of all the ladies and gentlemen of Rome. As he

had prayed that it might be, Ignatius died almost instantly, and when his friends came in the evening after the "sport" was over, and the Amphitheatre cleared of its spectators, they found only two or three mangled bones to gather up as the relics of the saintly servant of Christ. The vast building within whose walls he suffered still stands, and one may be certain, within a few yards, of the place where this and many such tragedies stained the sand with Christian blood. For Ignatius was but one among thousands who were thus sacrificed, some whose names are known to us, far more whose names are known only in heaven, where they are "clothed in white robes, and palms are in their hands." It was one of the chief amusements of the Romans on high festivals to throng to the Coliseum, as the people of Madrid crowd to a bull-fight, and there witness the torture of Christians by wild beasts: and they could look on with pleasure, not only when such venerable old men as Ignatius were thus treated, but when, with frightful ingenuity, innocent women like the sainted Perpetua and Felicitas were tied in nets, and thrown into the arena to be tossed to death by wild cattle. Well might Pliny ask whether some distinction ought not to be made between old and young, the stronger and the weaker sex! And if atrocities like the martyrdom of St. Ignatius occurred during the reign of such an Emperor

as Trajan, what scenes of horror must not have been witnessed during those of more cruel tyrants, who encouraged the slaughter of Christians, and took pleasure in it! No wonder that of the thirty-three Bishops who presided over the Church of Rome from St. Paul's day to A.D. 314, eighteen died such deaths as Ignatius, and almost all the rest bore in their bodies the "marks of the Lord Jesus," with which the persecuting Paganism of their day had maimed or blinded them, in the vain endeavour to destroy Christianity by wounding and slaying those who confessed it.

There was probably no time of perfect security to Christians at any period during the first three centuries, though their treatment varied much according to the dispositions of individual rulers (whether Emperors or local magistrates), the political accidents of the day, and the prejudices of the Pagan population. The neighbourhood of Rome still shows a striking monument of the continuous danger to which those who professed Christianity were exposed, in the subterraneous excavations which they used as a secret place for their worship and for the burial of their dead; and this forms an illustration of our subject well worth consideration in further detail.

§. *The Church in the Catacombs.*

The soil of the Campagna or level district in the

midst of which Rome stands, is composed in most places of three distinct strata; the lowest being a volcanic rock called *Tufa litoide;* the uppermost a sandy material which is used for making Roman cement, and goes by the name of *Pozzolana;* and an intermediate layer called *Tufa granolare,* which is so far stone as to be useless for making cement without it is crushed to powder, and yet so soft as to be quite inapplicable to building or any similar purpose. Vast quantities of the upper or sandy portion of these strata used to be excavated for the making of the cement for which all Roman buildings are famous; and thus large *Arenaria* or sand-pits were formed under the soil, in large galleries twenty feet wide, and high enough for men and horses to work in them. The idea of the Christian Catacombs seems to have been suggested by these sand-galleries. Perhaps the persecuted race endeavoured to find concealment there on some occasions, and finding them too well known to be a secure refuge, provided other and more secret retreats of a somewhat similar character.

These retreats have from about the seventh century received the name of Catacombs[1]. In the first in-

[1] From κατα and *recumbo.* "*Ad catacumbas*" was the name given to a temporary resting-place provided for the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul between the Basilica of St. Sebastian and the Appian way; and the name afterwards became general. Another derivation is from κατα, and κυμβος—a hollow; but the first is the more probable.

stance they were galleries, about eight feet high, and from three to five feet wide, leading out of some secluded portion of the Arenaria, and driven through the intermediate "tufa granolare," which has already been mentioned. As the soft stone was excavated it was probably crushed, and passed observation (if attention was drawn to it) as the usual produce of the well-known pozzolana galleries; and often when one gallery had been filled, as will presently be described, with the bodies of deceased Christians, the soil excavated from a new gallery was removed into it. These excavations appear to have been commenced almost in Apostolic times, one inscription having been found with a date belonging to the third year of Vespasian, which was A.D. 71; and they were continued until persecution ceased, some inscriptions having been found indeed of as late a date as the fifth century. There are about sixty different sets of these Catacombs known in the Campagna, most of them being within three miles of the city. It has been computed by those who have almost lived in them for the purpose of studying their history and the antiquities which they contain, that there are 800 or 900 miles of galleries so excavated, and that they contain six or seven millions of sepulchral niches, each of which has been or is still the resting-place of a Christian body. This was an immense work, even though spread over three centuries; but it seems less

wonderful when the fact is known that there was a body of Christians as well trained to such mining as Durham pitmen, who made it their trade to carry on these excavations and to bury the dead. They went by the name of Fossors, and the painting of one named Diogenes, with his excavator's tools around him, is still to be seen on the side of one of these galleries.

There can be little doubt that the primary purpose which these Catacombs were intended to answer was that of cemeteries, the Christians never burning their dead as did the heathen. Why such studied concealment of their burial-places was necessary is not indeed clear: for though it was well known that such cemeteries existed, it was very rarely that they were discovered by the heathen. It is not unlikely that, as the celebration of the Holy Communion was a part of the rites of burial, the early Christians set great value on a special ceremony in the inhumation of their dead, which could only be securely performed in secret places. But though they were primarily intended for this purpose, there is abundant evidence that they were also used as places of ordinary Divine worship, this use also being dimly known to the Pagan Romans, so that their Christian fellow-citizens were often called a "skulking, darkness-loving race."

In using these galleries for the burial of the dead, the most ordinary practice was to excavate small coffin-like

holes, the size of the body to be buried, in the sides of the gallery, and these were called *Loculi*, or "little homes," as the whole place was called a "cemetery" or "resting-place." Tiers of these graves occupy mile after mile of the galleries, in every one of which a body has been laid, often that of a martyr, the aperture being then hermetically sealed with cemented slabs of stone or marble. On the outside surface of these slabs, or on the cement with which they are secured, an inscription was frequently cut, or marked with the end of a tool or the finger; and some of these inscriptions have proved valuable memorials of primitive Christianity, many indicating by the palm-branch what has been the fate of those whom they commemorate; others the occupation followed by the departed, and nearly all the faith with which Christians put their departed ones to rest in peace, in the "sure and certain hope" that there is "a resurrection unto eternal life."

In the time of fierce persecution, it was to these cemeteries that the Bishops of Rome and their flock retired, and some portions of the galleries are excavated into larger spaces, which served the purpose of churches, and where the altar still occasionally remains. It is recorded that, on one occasion, such a meeting of Christians for Divine worship was reported to one of the Emperors, when he came with a troop of soldiers, and blocked up the entrance, so as to prevent their escape.

Years afterwards the relics of this whole congregation were discovered in the place where they had been worshipping, and in their midst were the silver vessels in which the Holy Sacrament had been celebrated. Perhaps the cases were not few in which they were in the same hour the church and the grave of martyrs. So it is known that Bishop Stephen, who had retreated here, and lived in concealment for some time, was at last murdered as he sat in his Episcopal chair. So St. Cyprian, in his 80th Epistle, tells his brother successors that Xystus (the fifth Bishop of Rome who had suffered in the ten years during which Cyprian himself had been Bishop) had been martyred in the cemetery, with four deacons, on the eighth of the ides of August, in which he was writing, and only just before his own time for a like end had arrived[2]. So also Caius lived eight years in a Catacomb, and then came forth to a cruel death in the persecution of Dioclesian's days.

This practice of worshipping in the Catacombs is mentioned by St. Jerome[3], who says that while he was pursuing his studies at Rome, he was accustomed to go with others on Sundays to visit the sepulchres of the

[2] The tombs of four Bishops of Rome have been brought to light in modern times in the Catacomb of St. Calixtus; viz., Eleutherus [A.D. 177], Anterus [A.D. 175], Fabian [A.D. 236], and Lucius [A.D. 256]. The three last were all martyrs. Damasus [A.D. 384] lies in an adjoining crypt.

[3] In his Commentary on Ezekiel.

Apostles and Martyrs. They frequently entered the crypts or hiding-places, which were dug deep in the earth, and had on each side the bodies of the dead laid in the walls, and there was seldom any light (though here and there a shaft was carried up into some private field or vineyard) to mitigate the gloom of the place. Eusebius also mentions that a Pagan governor of Egypt had suggested to the Emperor Valerian, that Christians should not be allowed to meet in or to use the places which they called cemeteries. And Prudentius, the great Christian poet of the fourth century, describes them in one of his hymns[4]. Thus the books of past time, and the actual monuments which exist to the present, show us, each in their way, that the Christianity of those early ages was driven to hide itself in life and death to save itself from annihilation; and that they "of whom the world was not worthy," but who now bow before the presence of God, were once compelled to fly to "dens and caves of the earth," that Paganism might not gain a final victory over the faith of Christ.

§. *The last Contest.*

At the end of the two hundred and fifty years or so during which this struggle was going on, the victory really remained on the side of Christianity. The num-

[4] xi. 153.

ber of Christians seemed to be not at all lessened by the continual mowing down which their ranks underwent at the hands of the persecutors. Every city, town, and island was filled with them, said the angry Pagan writers; they swarmed in camp and council, in the senate and in the palace, and no places were left to the maintainers of the old religion but the temples and the theatres; the very cattle-markets were being affected by the absence of purchasers for sacrificial victims, through the spread of these Christians.

Paganism, meanwhile, was fast losing its hold upon the Roman world. The extraordinary preternatural powers which had evidently been exercised at times by it as the minister of Satan, were now restrained; the oracles which had been to the heathen what living prophets were to the Jews, had become extinct, though a shadow of them was maintained by the Pagan priests as late as the fifth century, when they were entirely suppressed by command of Theodosius. The temples were comparatively deserted, and Christian churches were raising their fronts on every side, so that at the end of the third century there were no fewer than forty churches in Rome itself. The towns were, in fact, becoming so Christian that persons who were not Christian were scarcely to be found, except in villages, *Pagan* and *countryman* coming to be synonymous words from this circumstance. It is probable that in many parts of

the Empire, particularly in Western Europe, the number of Christians far exceeded the number of heathen long before the cessation of persecution.

But when the struggle seemed almost over, and Christianity victorious, one last and dreadful effort was made by the enemy of Christ to stem the tide of triumph, and secure once more the open Empire of the world. This attempt is commonly known as

§. *The Diocletian Persecution.*

That most terrible of all persecutions that Christians ever had to undergo lasted through ten weary and sad years, from A.D. 303 to A.D. 313, and extended more or less over the whole Roman Empire. We can but sketch out here its general features and progress, as they are handed down to us in history.

Diocletian became Emperor in the year 284, and reigned till 305, when he resigned his throne. In his time the Roman dominions began to be systematically divided into an Eastern and a Western Empire; and while Diocletian reigned over the East at Nicomedia, Maximian, a rough and ignorant soldier, was appointed by him as his western colleague, having Rome for his place of government. A few years later, in 292, a further subdivision took place, two inferior sovereigns being appointed under the name of Cæsars; Constantius, the father of Constantine, commanding Britain, France,

and Spain, while Galerius was governor of Eastern Europe. Of these four rulers, Constantius was always favourably disposed towards Christianity, and was besides this a man of merciful disposition. Dioclesian himself was at first far from inimical to the Church, and in his early years it seemed to grow more prosperous than ever. Maximian represented the old idolatrous Paganism of the ignorant classes. But Galerius was the most bitter and fanatical foe that Christianity ever had among the Roman rulers.

Both Maximian and Galerius endeavoured, and it seems for a long time in vain, to persuade Dioclesian to sanction and take part in a general attempt at the extinction of Christianity; a woman as usual, the mother of Galerius, being the moving spirit of the attempt. The health of Dioclesian was failing, and with it the strength of mind of which he had undoubtedly been possessed; and as his power thus grew less, that of his associate Galerius increased. The persecution seems to have begun in Europe, under the authority of Maximian, even before it began in the East. Many soldiers were now Christians,—as St. Sebastian, who was shot to death at Rome, and our own St. Alban, beheaded at Verulam, show,—and there is said to have been a whole brigade, numbering 6000, and called the Theban legion, of which all were Christians. As the army of Maximian was marching on to France, it was stopped in one of the

valleys of Switzerland, for the purpose of taking certain oaths, contrived perhaps for the very object of entrapping Christian soldiers. The Theban legion refused them as one man, and were decimated. The remaining nine-tenths of the legion again refused, and were again decimated. A third time, the remainder were called on to take the oaths, and refusing once more, every one of them were slaughtered. So runs the story, which, though it may be exaggerated, seems only too much in keeping with the horrors of a time in which all the inhabitants of a town in Phrygia were slaughtered [5]—man, woman, and child,—for the same crime of Christianity.

In A.D. 302, Diocletian yielded to the influence of Galerius, and issued an edict declaring that Christianity was a crime and must be punished. An oracle had declared, or was pretended to have declared, that the number of Christians was so great as to hinder the gods from giving responses; and this seems to have turned the scale against them. The edict decreed the suppression of Christianity under six different heads. (1.) Churches were to be demolished. (2.) All the sacred books of Christians were to be given to the flames. (3.) All Christians who held office in the army or at court were to be degraded from their rank. (4.) Freedmen, who had become Christians, were to be again enslaved if they persisted in their profession of

[5] Lactantius and Eusebius both record this fact.

Christianity. (5.) Christians of every degree were to be rendered incapable of prosecuting causes in the law courts. (6.) All meetings and associations of Christians were strictly prohibited.

The first head of this edict was put in practice on February 23rd, in the presence of the Emperors Diocle-sian and Galerius, by the demolition of the great church of Nicomedia. Shortly after this, the royal palace was discovered to be on fire; and Galerius immediately suggesting to Dioclesian that this was an attempt at retaliation on the part of the Christians, the third portion of the edict was carried out by the arrest and torture of all among the royal household who owned to the faith. They were hung up by the hands, whipped, scorched with hot metal, and burnt to death.

Fifteen days later there was another fire—this like the former being supposed to have originated with Galerius. But his purpose of alarming Dioclesian being effected, he left the city, declaring that he did so in bodily fear of the Christians. Then, every Christian whom the Emperor could lay his hands upon, and who would not recant by sacrificing, was either beheaded, burnt, or thrown into the sea. Dioclesian also communicated with Maximian and Constantius, urging them to take a similar vengeance upon the hated race. Maximian entered fully into the spirit of the other persecutors; but Constantius never went further than the demolition of

two or three churches, by which he paid a sort of formal obedience to the orders sent him.

In the year 305, Dioclesian and Maximian both resigned their positions as Emperors of the East and West, and were succeeded by Galerius and Constantius, their coadjutors hitherto; Severus and Maximinus taking the subordinate posts of the latter. All but Constantius kept up the persecution; and during several years every endeavour was used by them to suppress Christianity throughout the Empire, and to restore Paganism to its ancient power and splendour. So far was this supposed to be effected that an inscription has been discovered in Spain, by which it was declared to posterity that Christianity had been destroyed and annihilated in the days of Dioclesian.

Constantius died at York on July 25th, 306, declaring his son Constantine as his successor; but for a time the Roman Empire was governed or claimed by no fewer than five emperors besides Constantine. In A.D. 309, Maximian, who had resumed the purple, was secured and put to death by the young Emperor. In A.D. 311, Galerius was seized with such a mortal disease as that by which Herod died; and in his terror he issued an edict of toleration for the Christians, declaring himself utterly unable with all his endeavours to resuscitate Paganism. In A.D. 314, the empire was entirely divided between his successor Licinius and Constantine;

but after some years of alternate peace and war, the former was defeated and put to death, and Constantine became, as the predecessors of Dioclesian had been, sole ruler of the whole Roman Empire, A.D. 324.

As early as A.D. 313, when Constantine gained the great victory over one of his rivals, Maxentius, on occasion of which he is said to have seen a cross in the heavens, with the words ἐν τούτῳ νίκα, "conquer by this," he issued an edict of toleration known as the Edict of Milan; and in some measure recognized Christianity by using the well-known Labarum, a standard with this device on it being the first two letters of *XPIΣ-TOΣ*, the Greek form of the name of Christ; and from that time the persecution almost entirely ceased. With this sole supremacy in A.D. 324 came the final issue of the struggle between Paganism and Christianity, and the triumph of the latter began openly to appear. Although the Emperor was not baptized until he was on his death-bed, which was in the year 337, he acted as a Christian Emperor from the first year of his supremacy. In previous years he had exercised the widest toleration towards Christians, but had not wholly set aside Paganism. In the year 321, he went a step further, and issued an edict establishing the Lord's Day as a day of abstinence from labour. On the death of Licinius, he issued another, exhorting all his subjects

to forsake Paganism and worship Christ alone; and from that time he connected himself wholly with Christianity.

This was a glorious era for the so lately persecuted faith. Churches arose again from their ashes, the Emperor himself being the first, at St. Peter's, the Laterah, and elsewhere, to begin the work with his own hands. Maimed and blinded Bishops came back from exile to resume the pastoral care of their dioceses. A great assembly of more than 300 Bishops met under the influence of the Emperor to consult about the affairs of the Church throughout the world. And, as a monument of the change, a great Christian city arose on the site of Byzantium, in which (would that it had ever been so since!) no symbol but that of Christ lifted up its front to heaven.

Another half century, and Paganism, as a general religion, became extirpated from Europe, Asia Minor, and Africa, and the Cross triumphed every where. If, since then, Christianity has yielded up ground which at that time came into her possession, it is not Paganism that has driven her away, but other developments of the enemy's influence; breaches of unity, heresy, and the great anti-Christian power of Mahometanism. These, however, must be considered in other chapters: and we may now end this summary of the great struggle which went on from the time of Nero in the year 65 to

that of Constantine's victory in the year 312, a period of nearly two hundred and fifty years. Such had been the life of Christians during that period that the very words by which the acts of bearing testimony to the truth, and of acknowledging oneself to be a Christian were expressed, received a baptism of blood, and became words synonymous with a painful death for the sake of the truth, or a crisis of suffering in which death was expected. Thus we know such "witnesses" as "martyrs," witnesses unto death, and those who confessed Christ before men in the expectation of death as "Confessors." So does history stamp its mark upon language, and words contain history: and when we sing of a "noble army of Martyrs" praising God, our thoughts may recur to that age of Christianity when it took all a man's mental and physical courage to make the confession, "I am a Christian;" and when the result of such a confession before a legal tribunal was almost certain to be death—the sword, the fire, the cross, or the arena.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY IMITATIONS AND ADULTERATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

It has become very much the fashion of late years, to speak with a tenderness not formerly customary about the early corruptions of Christianity, and to assume a less tender tone than our Christian forefathers were accustomed to use towards those by whom such corruptions were opposed. Mr. Kingsley's treatment of St. Cyril of Alexandria, in his clever historical novel "Hypatia," is one striking illustration of this. Another may be found in one of Mr. Maurice's Lectures on the Ecclesiastical History of the First and Second Centuries. In one page this brilliant writer describes the martyrdom of St. Ignatius, and on another the errors of some unbelievers who denied Christ altogether, and said that they supposed Christ was but a shadow—an apparent, not a real person. The first case gives opportunity for some severe remarks on the habit which the early Christians had of collecting the bones of their brothers

and sisters, parents, children, friends, or pastors, who had been devoured by wild beasts for the amusement of Pagan society. These good, loving, and honest-hearted relatives of those who suffered for Christ, and who themselves very likely went through the same dreadful trial not long afterwards, are bitterly stigmatized as the imitators of a corrupt idolatry—the adoration of relics: though it is very improbable that men who could thus face danger, and prepare to face death rather than deny Christ in public, would yet deny Him by such false worship when they returned to the privacy of their own homes and Churches. On the other hand, when any thing is to be said of those who never thought of martyrdom, and who made their Christianity so like heathenism that the heathens themselves would not persecute them, the same author describes them and their wretched theories in glowing and more than half-admiring language. And when he shows how they thought Christ was a myth of the imagination he seems quite to sympathize with them in the fanciful ideality which they thus substituted for the literal truth.

The line which will here be taken in dealing with these imitations and adulterations of Christianity will be more simple, more in agreement with historical truth, and more in agreement with the old habits and belief of Christians. The present writer can sympathize

strongly with minds which are struggling to get to the light; but he can feel no sympathy whatever with those who rush out of light into darkness. There is an old parable of a husbandman who sowed his field with good corn, and while men slept the enemy came and sowed tares in the field. In this chapter we must try never to forget *who* it was that sowed the tares; nor that tares are altogether mischievous and useless in a field of corn.

In considering this subject we must also remember that Christianity came into the world making an exclusive claim, and in some respects a hard claim, upon the minds of men. It did not say to the old religions, Reform yourselves, or, Be transmuted into a higher and better character; but it bade them depart altogether and give place to itself. It claimed to be, from the very first starting of the Church, the one only religion which was true in doctrine and saving in practice.

Now this claim was set up in the face of two religious systems which had existed for many centuries; first, the compact and definite system of Judaism; and secondly, the less compact but still older system of Paganism. In the last chapter an endeavour was made to shew how these two systems strove to suppress the new comer in its early days by means of violence and persecution. The object of the present chapter will

be to show how they tried to overcome it by starting false copies of it which might deceive the unwary; or by mixing up with true Christianity a quantity of inventions and sophisms derived from their own systems.

§. *Errors about the Person of Christ.*

The most prominently distinctive characteristic about Christianity, both as an historical fact and a theoretical doctrine, was (as it ever will be) the Incarnation of God. There was nothing in Judaism of at all an analogous kind; and although some faint resemblance to it may be found in heathen mythology, it may well be doubted whether the resemblance was perceptible to the heathen mind, it is so very faint. All men having a natural belief in One who stood to them in the relation of God, the Jews believed further in that God's words and acts, as He had made them known to them; and the heathen added to their natural religion (or superseded it by) a system of Polytheism, by which the One God was forgotten, and many imitations set up in His stead. Christianity, on the other hand, went forth into the world declaring that there lived a Man in heaven who had lived upon earth for thirty-three years, seen by a few, but a very few, of the world's inhabitants; that this Man was God Himself; that all religion for the future was to converge towards His Person;

that any one wilfully rejecting the religion so offered was rejecting the only Person and the only system which could help him on here and make him acceptable to God, or give him hope for the future that lies beyond the grave. Thus the claim was made that Jesus Christ, sprung from an obscure family of an obscure nation, living an obscure life, and dying the death of a criminal, was to be received as the Personal centre of religion by the whole world; and this claim was made, too, in such a comprehensive sense that no qualification whatever of the terms offered was permitted. How this claim was physically opposed we have seen in the chapter on the struggle between Paganism and Christianity, let us now see how it was intellectually opposed.

The first attack was, of course, against the bare facts on which this Christian theory was grounded. The Jews averred that Christ was a mere man, that he had died as ordinary men die, and that nothing had since happened to show that He was more than an ordinary man. Hence the Apostles were sent forth into the world as *witnesses* to these fundamental facts of Christianity, especially to the fact that Christ's spontaneous Resurrection from the dead on the third day after His Crucifixion, and His subsequent ascent into Heaven, proved Him to be not mere man, but God; and as it was found after a time that the facts could not be disproved, so the attempt to disprove them was gradually given up.

Then there appear to have sprung up several rivals to the Person on whose account this claim of Universal Faith and Universal Worship was made, according to our Lord's own predictions that men would arise saying "I am Christ," and that "false Christs" would try to lead away the disciples of the true. Three such leaders are mentioned in the Acts; two, viz. Theudas and Judas (who claimed to be Divine leaders of the Jews in our Lord's Infancy), by the Jew Gamaliel[1]; and another, the Jew for whom St. Paul was at first mistaken by the Roman governor of the castle at Jerusalem[2]. The latter pretender led a large multitude out of the holy city in the year 55, and appears to have been able to work some of those false "signs and wonders" which our Lord had predicted that "false Christs" should have power to do. He promised his followers that if they would go with him to the Mount of Olives, they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall down at his command; but Felix led troops against him, put him to flight, and slaughtered a large number of his associates. And he, says Josephus, was only one of many like him, who arose about that time to mislead the people.

Among such false claimants to a Divine mission were also Simon Magus, Menander, and Dositheus, of whom

[1] Acts v. 36. [2] Acts xxi. 38.

the first seems to be the type, as he was also the first in order of time. He was born a Samaritan, as were the other two also, but educated in Egypt, probably at Alexandria, where he became imbued with the subtle metaphysics of Oriental philosophy. He gave out that he was the "great power of God," not denying altogether the Divine nature of our Lord Jesus, but claiming a still nearer place to the Godhead. There is no room for doubting the traditions which declare that he was able to work miracles, and his name of "the Magian" probably indicates as much. Of his conflict with St. Peter at Samaria an account is given in Acts viii. 8—24; and there seems more probability than the contrary in the account which is given by ecclesiastical historians of a still later encounter at Rome. It would appear that Simon had carried his imitation of Christ so far that at last he promised his disciples he would ascend to heaven in their sight from the Capitol, and fixed a day for the miracle. St. Peter prayed to God that he would defeat the supernatural devices of Satan, and after Simon had risen a short distance from the earth, he fell down and was killed. Of Menander little is recorded, but it is distinctly said of Dositheus that he claimed to be the Messiah, and that the High Priest of the Jews, endeavouring to apprehend him in consequence, he fled to a cave and there miserably perished.

Thus we see a type of the second form in which the

enemy sowed tares among the wheat; by setting up willing instruments to personate, imitate, or rival the Lord Jesus, when it was found that the facts on which the Divine claims of the latter were based could no longer be denied. Claiming a Divine origin and Divine authority, and supporting his claim by the exercise of preternatural power, Simon Magus was the very type of those "false Christs" who tried to suppress the religion of the true One, standing in some similar relation to it as that which was held towards the Jewish system by the Egyptian magicians whose enchantments rivalled for a time the miracles of Moses.

The next class of opponents are represented by Cerinthus and the Docetæ, who expanded and methodized into a pseudo-philosophical system that which in Simon Magus was nothing but a crude, though supernatural imposture.

Cerinthus was a Jew, born at Antioch, but chiefly educated at Alexandria. Like his predecessor, he was learned in Rabbinical Judaism and in Oriental Pagan philosophy; and this learning he combined with some knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity, which charmed him perhaps with some of its features, but was not received in its integrity and absoluteness. Of his personal history little is known. The answer which this learned man's wisdom gave to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" was that Christ was a kind of

superior angel[3], sent down by God to repair the evil caused by a supposed degeneration of a supposed original Creator and Lawgiver of the world. He maintained that Jesus was at first a mere human person, conceived and born in the ordinary manner by which children are brought into the world, whereas the Gospels unite in declaring that he was conceived by the supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost, and born of one who was still a virgin at His birth. As the imaginary Jesus of Cerinthus grew up to an imaginary manhood, an imaginary Christ came in the form of a dove to be united to his natural person, and was so united until the eve of the crucifixion. At the crucifixion, this blasphemous theory went on to say, the Christ departed, and Jesus alone, a mere natural man, suffered, died, and was buried. To this impious theory, the Docetæ, his followers, added the tenet from which their name[4] is derived, that the Body which was crucified was not a real Body, but only a phantom, which had the appearance of one.

Against this strange attempt to make an intelligible system out of a mystery, the Apostle St. John taught and wrote, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled.

[3] *Æon* was the word used.

[4] From Δοκεῖν, to seem.

. . . . That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you;" using expressions which place beyond a doubt the reality of that Body which the Word of Life took to Himself, and with which He ascended into heaven. The story goes that St. John was once about to enter a bath, when he found that Cerinthus was within, and hastily left, exclaiming, "Let us leave the bath, lest even the very walls should fall down while the enemy of the truth is in it." So did the Apostle of Love, by word and deed, carry out the precept which he gave to Christians, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds[5]."

Passing over minor sects of misbelievers (for the object before us is to set out broad and clear outlines rather than to fill up details), we come now to that strange system which mixed itself up with all the misbelief of those early days, that of the Gnostics. Their theories are very unattractive to our Western mind, but they must not be overlooked, as they spread far and wide in the second century, and had even an enduring influence upon some parts of the world.

The Gnostics derive their name from the superior knowledge [γνῶσις] which they professed to have of the Divine Nature and of things Divine. Their extraordi-

[5] 2 St. John 10, 11.

nary tenets seem to have sprung from speculations about the origin of evil—a kind of speculations which have always proved very seductive to the minds of unsettled philosophizers about religion—and which resolve themselves for the most part into the inquiry, "Could God have any thing to do with the evil in its beginning; or has He anything to do with it now?"

This difficulty, as it is supposed to be, was solved in Persian philosophy by a corrupt form of belief respecting God and the Evil One. Two deities were imagined, under the names of Ormuzd and Ahriman, the first of whom was supposed to be the First Cause of Light and Good, while the second stood in a similar relation to Evil and Darkness. When Christianity arose, many speculative philosophers who were taken with the beauty of its system, but not converted to it, sought to amalgamate with it the existing beliefs, or rather misbeliefs, with which they were familiar; and among them are to be classed the Gnostics, who amalgamated this Persian system with some parts of Christianity. Among the various forms of error which assumed the name of Gnosticism, and the various absurdities with which the system was crowded, we may take the following leading principles as being those which especially brought it into collision with the Truth, and those which were invariably to be found mingled with the mass of "science falsely so called" of which it was made up. (1) They pretended

that God was never manifested to the world until Christ came. (2) That the world could not have been made by God, because it is a material world, but every thing material is necessarily evil. (3) That the way in which the world came into being was by God's first creating two beings inferior to Himself, which were personifications of Power and Wisdom. (4) From these two a number of other inferior beings or æons descended, of whom one created the world, rebelled against the Supreme God, and became the God of the Old Testament. (5) That Christ was one of these inferior beings, sent into the world to give the true γνωσις, or knowledge of things Divine. (6) That Christ descended on the man Jesus at his Baptism, and so forth, as before mentioned under the head of the Docetæ. (7) That after death there is no resurrection of the body, because the body, being material, is evil; but the soul is absorbed into God.

All these blasphemous theories are plainly part of that chain which Cerinthus began to forge. They culminated in the heresy of Manes (whose followers were called Manichees, or sometimes Maniacs), in the third century. He took up all previous errors, and compounded them into one vast anti-Christianism, which spread through Egypt, Africa, Persia, and Arabia, became the parent of most of the misbelief of Oriental nations, and was the precursor of Mahometanism. There is plainly some

connection between the Gnosticism of these early days and the modern Buddhism by which so many millions are enslaved. Or, perhaps, they both originated in that half-knowledge about the Truth which alone Satan has been supposed, by good and learned men, to possess[6]. Speculative Christians of a later day associated the philosophy of Plato with their Christianity, and this formed a much more innocent amalgamation than the dreadful mixture of Light and Darkness which went by the name of Gnosticism.

There were two accompanying characteristics of all the erroneous doctrines hitherto described which glaringly distinguish those who held them from true Christians. The one was that they never suffered for their belief, as Christians did by thousands, but were ready to give it up when required to do so by heathen persecutors: the other that the Docetæ, the Gnostics, the Manichees, and all such false Christians were as notorious for their vices as the true Christians were for their virtues.

§. *Errors about the Nature of Christ.*

We may now leave the fundamental attacks upon

[6] Buddhism seems, from internal evidence, to be connected with the religion of Zoroaster, whom Eastern traditions aver to have been a pupil of the prophet Daniel. The researches of M. Huc in Thibet show, however, that there is much corrupted Christian tradition mixed up with Buddhism in its present form, even if it originally dates from so ancient a period.

Christianity with which this chapter has hitherto dealt, and go on to the consideration of another, and even more subtle class, in which the nature of Christ as God on the one hand, or as Man on the other, were made the subject of assault, doubt, and misbelief.

Perhaps we may best understand the course of these errors and the errors themselves, by reminding ourselves of that favourable position in which we now stand by having the plain declaration of the Nicene Creed set forth for our guidance. Of this Creed we shall have to speak more at length presently, and it need only be mentioned now that it was an enlarged version of the Apostles' Creed, agreed to by 318 Bishops, who had assembled from all parts of the world in the city of Nicæa, to search and consider what was the real Scriptural doctrine respecting our Blessed Lord's nature, which had been handed down from the Apostles. Its statements on the subject may be thus classified :—

I. [1]. There is "One Lord Jesus Christ," and therefore there is no pretence for those who have said, Lo, here is Christ, or Lo, there, since His departure from the world.

[2]. He is "the only-begotten Son of God," and therefore Son of God in a sense in which no other so called can be.

[3]. "Begotten of His Father before all worlds,"

and therefore not coming into existence, as the Gnostics had said, after the world was created.

II. [1]. He is "GOD," coming "of GOD, Light" coming of Light, "Very GOD" coming of "Very GOD;" and consequently, not in theory or imagination, but in actual reality God, as the Father by Whom He is begotten is God,—as truly Divine as the Father.

[2]. He is "Begotten not made," no created being, but God, though a Son.

[3]. "Being of one Substance with the Father," like unto Him in every perfection of His Being. "By whom all things were made."

III. [1]. "Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven."

[2]. "And was Incarnate: By the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man."

[3]. "And was crucified," &c. &c.

By keeping this classification of Catholic truths in view we shall better understand, though by an irregular course, as far as their history is concerned, the errors of which an account is now to be given; and they may also serve the purpose of showing us the way in which the ancient creed of the Church meets modern error as it did that against which it was framed.

The heresies respecting our Lord's nature all grafted themselves on to the original fundamental denial that He was any thing more than man. This denial has

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been seen already to underlie the wretched systems of the Gnostics and their predecessors, but in their case it was woven in less subtilly with Christian truth.

In the first instance it was attempted to diminish from the importance of our Lord's central position as the Divine Person in whom Christianity was founded, by misstating the doctrine of the Unity of God. Sabellius was a Bishop or priest—little is known of him—belonging to Northern Africa, who took up and expanded heretical opinions on this subject which had originated not long before with Praxeas. The latter had maintained that "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" were but three names for one Person. Sabellius improved upon this by saying that they were names representing three properties or capacities of One Person, the Word being not a distinct Person in the one Godhead, but only a property of God, and so also of the Holy Spirit. This Sabellianism confounded the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and so denied the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity altogether, and as a necessary consequence denied the Divine nature of our Lord Jesus. In fact, the Sabellians maintained that God the Father, or the whole Godhead as they acknowledged it, was the Person who suffered and rose from the dead.

This theory was followed up more subtilly still by a Bishop of Antioch, known by the name of Paul of Samosata, a vain, ostentatious, and secular man, but

one of great influence, who seems to have first of all fallen into the heresy of Sabellius in the endeavour to make concessions of difficult points for the sake of converting the great Zenobia, and then to have originated the opinions of which Arius was the notorious leader in the fourth century. About A.D. 270 he was expelled from his see of Antioch, and his heresy was afterwards eclipsed by that of Arius, which was of so much importance that a longer account of it must be given than has been given of any of the preceding ones.

§. *Arius and Arianism.*

Arius was born in Ptolemais (now known as Tolmeit), a city in Cyrenaica, or that portion of North Africa which lies exactly opposite to the southern part of Greece. The important part of his life takes in from A.D. 306 to A.D. 336, and he was probably born about A.D. 280, though the latter date is uncertain, and the thirty years indicated is the period with which we have to deal in treating of his personal history and influence. In his appearance and manners he was exceedingly attractive, and much of his personal influence seems to have been gained by his gentle and winning ways in society. We read of him as a very tall man, having an ascetic look, but accustomed to dress in an unclerical coat of half the usual length. His countenance was serious, and wore a mysterious

expression of cloudiness, though by no means of moroseness. In character, he was a man of much ability, tact, and learning, and he was full of energy. His energy was, however, of a restless character—perhaps it needed the anchorage of some great employment—and there was that want of balance in his mind which leads men of his disposition into always being inclined in favour of the person or the thing which may happen to be opposed or denounced by those in authority. Hence the first we hear of Arius is as a young layman making himself so prominent as a partizan of Meletius,—a Bishop of Lycopolis, who had apostatized from Christianity to save his life during the Diocletian persecution, and when safe times had returned wished to take up his former position as if nothing had happened—that he appears to have been even excommunicated by his own Bishop, Peter of Alexandria. Arius was, however, reconciled to the Bishop, and ordained Deacon about the year 306. His partizanship was not by any means eradicated, nevertheless; for the supporters of Meletius having started a Church of their own, and Meletius having ordained Bishops, Arius advocated their claims to be admitted on equal terms of fellowship by the Bishop of Alexandria; and this went on until he was again ejected from the communion of the Church. Whenever he was excommunicated Arius seems to have repented, and when he was received back again to have

relapsed on the earliest opportunity. The repentance now came with the imprisonment of the Bishop by the persecutor Maximin, in 311. It was thought likely, as it turned out in fact, that Peter would be put to death, and Arius had some expectation that he might become his successor. To be so, however, it was first necessary that he should be restored to the communion of the Church, and he persuaded a number of the Alexandrian clergy, who probably thought the matter between Arius and the Bishop was more personal than any thing else, to go to Peter in prison and intercede for his restoration. This was sternly refused by the old Bishop, who supported his refusal by an account of a vision he had seen the night before, in which it was revealed to him that Arius would be the cause of terrible divisions in the Church of Christ. Turning to two clergymen named Achillas and Alexander, he predicted that they, and not Arius, would each in his turn be his successors, and the event proved his words to be prophetic.

After the Bishop's martyrdom, in the year 312, the first named of these, Achillas, was elected Bishop, and Arius, appearing to him to be penitent (and probably being so at the time, for he was a man of strong impulses), he restored him to communion, ordained him Priest, appointed him to the charge of the church of Baucalis in Alexandria, and made him Divinity Lecturer

at the college of that city, where he became exceedingly popular with his pupils.

Achillas dying, Alexander and Arius were candidates for the see: but it seems that a very small party desired the election of the latter, and the prediction of the martyred Bishop was again fulfilled by the election of Alexander. Arius and the party who had supported him were, however, thrown into a bitter state of hostility towards those who had preferred Alexander, and he sought in the position of a controversial leader the gratification of that ambition which could not be gratified in the more legitimate way. Alexander, on the other hand, gave Arius the first place of dignity among his clergy, next to himself.

The particular line which Arius chalked out for himself was that of substituting "rational" ideas about the Blessed Trinity for those mysteries which had been hitherto accepted and believed in by the great body of Christians at all times and every where. He followed in the track of former heretics, and kept up the succession which is to be traced through Paul of Samosata, Sabellius, Praxeas, the Gnostics, the Doçetæ and Cerinthus, back to the Apostolic age itself: but as the last general persecution of the Church, which occurred just before the final triumph of the Church over mere brute violence, was the most severe which it had to undergo, so the last heresy of that period was by far the most dangerous and the most widely spread of all heresies.

Arius began by a controversy with a clergyman named Baucalas, in which the eternal existence of our Lord as God the Son was the subject of dispute, but who was the original assailant of the other does not appear, though it seems probable that Arius was, since he had already accused the Bishop of Sabellianism. The matter became notorious, and the Bishop was driven to take some steps respecting it. What he did was exceedingly fair and honourable, and shows that he was not actuated by any private pique against his late rival; for he called together a hundred of the neighbouring Bishops that they might hear what each of the disputants had to say, and advise him as to the right or the wrong of their arguments. Arius, meanwhile, took a step which seems to show that he was a thorough agitator, and not over nice in his sense of honour; for while his matter was thus *sub judice* he endeavoured to secure influence over his judges by writing to all neighbouring Bishops. Every one of them, however, with the exception of Eusebius of Nicomædia (not Eusebius the historian, who was Bishop of Cæsarea) refused their countenance, and referred him to his diocesan. Bishop Alexander and the hundred other Bishops decided that the doctrine of Arius was not the doctrine of the Church, and urged him to recant. As he refused to do so, and the case had become so serious that no alternative was left, the Bishop excommunicated him.

If Arius desired to increase his party by making himself notorious, as seems to have been the case, he succeeded in doing so. There are always many to side with an oppressed man, or one who is thought to be so, and this was a man made for popularity. Among the ladies of Alexandria he found many followers, a few of the virgins, members of a kind of contemplative association, being of the number. Some of the younger laity were also won over to his side; a few deacons, and several priests were his clerical supporters, as also the Bishop of Ptolemais, his native place, and of Marmarica, the see which lay between it and his present abode. But he seems never to have numbered men of the highest class of intellect among his followers, Eusebius the historian being the only one who could at all be excepted, and he only half inclining towards him at one period of his career, through fear of the clergy running into an opposite extreme.

After the condemnation of his opinions by the Bishop and provincial council of Alexandria, Arius left the city and went on a tour among the bishops of Palestine, endeavouring to win them over to his side. This led to a circular letter addressed by Bishop Alexander to seventy of them, in which he told them the history of the controversy, and mixed up with it the name of the Bishop of Nicomædia, who had always been an important friend of Arius (Nicomædia being the capital of the Eastern

Empire, as Rome was of the Western), and now espousing his cause more warmly still, received him as a visitor. The tact, energy, and talents of Arius are shown by his literary works while at Nicomædia, for he wrote a poem entitled Thalia (not now known, but said by St. Athanasius to contain some immorality), and also some songs for sailors and workmen, in which he endeavoured to secure a "public opinion" for his tenets among the lower classes.

The substance of Arian doctrine may be stated in a few words. It is that the Second Person in the Holy Trinity is not God in the same sense as the First, or in any true sense, because He is not eternal, and there was therefore a time when He did not exist. It was seldom, however, that Arius put forth his doctrine in this simple form, as his object seems to have been rather to secure as many supporters as he could by broad and indefinite statements, of which only educated theologians could see the bearing. That bearing is illustrated by the change which Arius and his followers adopted in the old Doxology of the Church. This they used in the form, "Glory be to the Father, *by* the Son, in the Holy Ghost," which is of course, in the mouth of an Arian, a most important change, since glory is given to the Father *by* every man who praises God, every such man being, if a Christian, part of the Temple of the Holy Ghost. But the more ancient form ascribes Glory *to* the Son

as it does *to* the Father, and hence acknowledges His equal Godhead. The controversy thus settled on the Greek word *homoüsius*, which in the English translation of the Nicene Creed is rendered "of one substance with;" the one side maintaining that God the Son is as entirely God as God the Father, the other that He is Man inspired by God. So that the heresy of Arius was, like all which preceded it, a consistent part of that enduring opposition with which our Lord's claim to Divine honour and worship has been met by the Enemy of Truth, ever since the claim was first made upon mankind: an opposition which has been shown in a vast variety of forms, and is still shown by some who call themselves Christians as well as by unbelievers.

It is beyond all doubt that the opinion thus held and taught by Arius was different from that which had always been accounted the Scriptural doctrine of the Church. But what we have had occasion to remark respecting some of his predecessors in heresy will show that it was only a modification of errors which had been taught by several discontented and ill-regulated minds before. It seems clear, also, that as there is no evidence of Arius being actuated by great love of truth at all risks (which has made some men stand up for errors under the idea that they were supporting truths), so there is evidence that he made his peculiar tenet the stepping-stone of an ambition which knew no bounds,

but which was stopped by death long before he had attained such heights as he was desirous of reaching. If he had taken up the position of a theologian who was anxious to reconcile two parties in the Church by finding out a middle course of doctrine, in which both might agree, or which both could accept as a ground on which to make peace, his conduct might be respected, or at least his wish for peace, even if his steps were taken in a wrong path. But such was not the position of Arius. His agitation began without reference to any party feeling then existing in the Church, except such as was connected with himself. He made a party; and, as it seems, took up the controversial position which he did for the sake of increasing that party, spreading his tenets as a kind of watchword for an army, which army he created that he might be its leader. It is, in fact, impossible, on a fair consideration of the circumstances, to give Arius credit for any high or religious motive in his endeavours to alter that doctrine which had been quietly received by the immense majority of Christians, and which previous agitators had not been able, though attacking it with such a variety of rival doctrines, to unsettle. Mankind would have gained nothing by the change; not one soul would have been made better by it, not one saved which could not be saved otherwise. It can never be that a single person will be made happier or more holy by the belief that Christ is not God; while

multitudes on multitudes would, if they lost their hold on the truth that He is, lose their chief hope for the future, and their chief strength for the present.

To return now to the history of Arius. The controversy had hitherto been represented by Alexander, Bishop or Patriarch of Alexandria, on one side, and Arius himself on the other. It was while the influence of the latter was being exerted to the utmost at Nicomædia, and had penetrated into the family circle of the Emperor Constantine, that a young deacon was brought forward by Alexander as the theological champion of the old doctrine. This young deacon became ultimately that great opponent of Arianism whose name is preserved in our memories to this day by the Creed which is called after his name (as representing his statements of the received doctrine), the great Athanasius.

The controversy had now covered so large a surface, and involved so many persons on either side, as to have become a public question of great importance. About fifty years later, the general interest which a revival of it excited, is quaintly but forcibly described by Gregory of Nyssa, "The town is full," he wrote, meaning Constantinople, "of those who dogmatize about incomprehensible matters; they are in the streets, in the markets, among the clothiers, money changers, and victuallers. If you ask any one how much you have to pay, they dogmatize about 'being begotten' and 'not being be-

gotten.' If you ask the price of bread, the reply is, 'The Father is greater than the Son, and the Son is inferior to the Father.' If you ask, 'Is the bath ready?' the answer is, 'The Son is made out of nothing.'" Though this was written when Arianism was in high favour with the Emperor, who then held his court at Constantinople, it probably represents something of the tone of society at Nicomedia and Alexandria at the period with which we are now dealing; and the moving causes which led the Emperor Constantine to interfere in the controversy. The Emperor did not attempt to decide it himself, but finding a large body of his subjects were at variance on a question which he was not competent to investigate, he appointed a proper ecclesiastic as a deputy for the purpose; entrusting Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, in the south of Spain, with the office of judging the case, and, if possible, of quieting the controversy.

The report which Hosius made to the Emperor was of such a nature that Constantine decided on assembling an immense Council of Bishops, from every part of the world, and entrusting to them the final decision of the question: and there seems to be an intimation of the vital and universal importance of it in the fact that such an idea was providentially impressed upon the mind of a recent convert like the Emperor, who could have known very little of the real point at issue, or of Christian Theology in general. This assembly met in the year

325 at Nicæa, not far from the Imperial residence and the new city which Constantine was then building on the opposite shore of the Bosphorus, and which still retains his name. To this Council of Nicæa, summoned by the secular head of the civilized world, 318 Bishops travelled from all parts of the world at the public expense, and some, it is thought, went thither even from our own far distant country. Such an assembly, when we come rationally to consider its composition, must have been one to command the respect of the age, and one which may command our respect also. Those who composed it were men of mature years; many of them long past the meridian of life; they had been picked out of the best educated class among their fellow-countrymen at home, as having the knowledge, judgment, and goodness which fitted them for the office of Bishop; they were many of them men who had suffered grievously for their religion, showing by their maimed bodies, as they sat in the Council, how real those sufferings had been; they now met together under Imperial command to decide on an important public question, and must have felt the responsibility of their office; and they believed that God's guidance was with them to lead them to a right decision.

The proceeding of the Council was in fact very simple, and its simplicity adds to its grandeur. All its members started with the axiom that the real object for

which they had met together was not to decide by argument who was right and who was wrong, but to judge of a fact—who was, and who was not, in agreement with the general belief of Christians all over the world, from the Apostles' time downwards. The Bishop of Cordova was President of the Council. Sylvester, the Bishop of Rome, was not there, but sent two priests as his representatives, who acted for him and had the second place of honour at the Council. Upon hearing the doctrine of Arius from his own lips, an universal indignation and horror was shown by the great majority of the Bishops, it was so plainly antagonistic to the truth which they had received, and believed, and taught, and on which their hopes were founded. When each in turn was asked to bear witness to the constant belief of the Church in his part of the world, the testimony proved to be an almost unanimous condemnation of the doctrine of Arius. And when the Nicene Creed (with the exception of the clauses after "I believe in the Holy Ghost," which were added some years later) when that Creed was submitted to the 318 Bishops, every one subscribed it as the true statement of their faith, except the two Bishops of Ptolemais and Marmarica; who have before been mentioned as being connected, the one with the birthplace of Arius, and the other with the adjacent country, and who were probably therefore his personal friends. Even Eusebius

of Nicomedia subscribed, but he did it by a subterfuge, turning the word "homo-üsion" into "homœ-usion," and thus, by the substitution of a diphthong for a single letter, making the word mean "of a *similar* substance," instead of meaning "of *one* substance" with the Father; a perversion the full value and importance of which was afterwards so strongly shown, as to remind one by contrast of our Lord's saying that not one jot or one tittle of His words should fall to the ground[7].

Of the subsequent progress of Arianism after this authoritative decision (which has since sufficed for the Church of the whole world during fifteen centuries) much detail cannot be given without entering into particulars that are likely to prove wearisome to the general reader. Arius himself was restored to Imperial favour through the influence of Constantia, the Emperor's sister, who had been entirely gained over to his heresy at Nicomedia. He was exiled after the Council, but recalled in a few years; and gradually gained so much influence at Court, that Constantine issued a command to Alexander, the Bishop of Constantinople, to receive the excommunicated heretic back to the com-

7 If these words look strange to the general reader, he may remember the familiar "homogeneous," which means "of the same genus or nature." A mass of silver alone, or a mass of gold alone, would be homo-geneous: a mass of gold and silver intermingled would be homœ-geneous; silver being a similar substance to gold, but not the same substance.

munion of the Church on a certain Sunday in the year 336. Alexander spent the Sabbath, the day before, in prayer, and it is specially recorded how he prayed God that either he or Arius might be removed from this life before the hour of trial came. The first minutes of that hour came, however, and both were living. A procession was formed, with Arius in the midst, and began a triumphant march through the city towards the Church of Peace, where Alexander was again prostrate at the altar. While the procession was pompously parading the city, and the triumph of Arius seemed all but complete, he was taken with a sudden pain, retired to a public closet behind the market-place of Constantine, and there died such a death as Judas died, even while the procession was waiting for his return. The hour came to an end: Alexander rose from prayer, and Arius was dead.

Arianism did not cease with the death of its inventor. It was the rallying centre for all discontented and unbelieving men, especially in the Eastern Church, for many a long year: and it was also the starting-point for some other heresies. Its peculiar attractiveness seems to rest on several grounds. First, there is always a latent wish in some classes of minds to escape from mystery in religion, and only to *believe* what can be entirely *understood*. Secondly, the difference between Arianism and its opponents seems at first sight, and

to those who are content with superficial examination, a trivial difference, though it really involves the whole Christian system. And, thirdly, there are always a great number of good-natured and well-meaning persons to whom peace and quietness is of more value than either side of a question of which they do not see the importance, and this class of persons generally sides with the weaker party. In modern days, under the names and forms of Unitarianism and Socinianism, it still maintains a hold over a considerable number of persons, and is the especial curse of those countries in which Protestantism merely, and not Catholic truth, is taken as the basis of union and belief. Disciples of Arius in England are comparatively few. In Switzerland and in America they abound.

§. *General Councils.*

Before concluding this chapter, we must glance at some other errors which made their appearance in the early years of the Church's triumph over Paganism, and while doing so we may also take the opportunity of glancing at the General Councils which were called to put them down.

What a General Council was has been already shown by the example of the Council of Nice or Nicæa; and it will be seen that it was very analogous in the religious world to those great Congresses in the political—such

as the Congress of Vienna or the Congress of Paris—by which the affairs of many separate nations are dealt with in a competent representative body. Such political Congresses are a feature peculiar to our own times, a nineteenth century modification of those interviews between sovereigns by means of which similar results were sought in former days: and General Councils were peculiar to an age when the greater part of the Christian world owned temporal allegiance to one Christian sovereign. It would be impossible to assemble a General Council which should equally deserve the name as a representative body, now that universal empire has passed away.

The Church and State of England officially recognize four General Councils; the 1 Eliz. declaring that no one should be convicted of heresy unless his opinions had been declared heretical by some one or more of these four General Councils, and was proved to be contrary to Holy Scripture[8]. The first of these four was that so intimately connected with us through the Creed of our Communion Service, of which as much has been already said as can be expected to interest general readers.

I. *The Council of Nicæa and the Arian Heresy.*

In addition to settling for ever the doctrine of the Church respecting our Lord's Divine Nature, the Nicene

[8] That portion of Elizabeth's Act which so enacts is still in force.

Council passed twenty Canons or Church laws, and transacted some other business. The whole of its proceedings were confirmed by the Emperor, much as Acts of Parliament receive the signature of the Sovereign of England, and they thus became a recognized part of the Constitution of the Christianized Empire; a circumstance which put Christianity on a footing it had never before occupied.

II. *The Council of Constantinople and the Macedonian Heresy.*

No other General Council was called until the year 381, when the Council of Constantinople met to consider the tenets of the Macedonians,—not the nation of that name, but the followers of Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople in 361, who had developed the Arian heresy by adding to a denial of our Lord's Divinity, a denial of that of God the Holy Ghost. The point of most interest to us in the meeting of this Council is the completion of the Nicene Creed. At Nicæa, that Creed had been developed from the Apostles' Creed, as far as "I believe in the Holy Ghost:" at the Council of Constantinople the rest was added as we now have it in the Book of Common Prayer[9].

[9] With this exception, that instead of "Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son," the clause stood "Who proceedeth from the

III. *The Council of Ephesus and the Nestorian Heresy.*

About half a century afterwards, in A.D. 431, another General Council was summoned by the Emperor Theodosius the younger, for the purpose of deliberating on the opinions of Nestorius, who, three years before, had become Patriarch, or Archbishop of Constantinople. At first, Nestorius was a vigorous opponent of Arianism; but he was led away by a refinement upon its errors which was maintained in the sermons of one of his chaplains named Anastasius, who seems to have been offended at the title Theotokos, or "Mother of God," which had been given to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Nestorius siding with his chaplain in disliking this title, he was led on to side with him also in his refinement upon Arianism, and was thus adopted by the old Arian party as their own, whether he would or no. As soon as it was seen that the doctrine of Nestorius and that of his chaplain—viz., that the Blessed Virgin was only the Mother of our Lord's manhood, and not of His Godhead—really involved the assertion that when our Lord was born into the world He was not God, it was thought desirable to settle a question that seemed only like old Arianism under a new mask, and accordingly the Emperor called

Father." Further particulars on this point will be found in the chapter on the "Breaking up of Early Christian Unity."

the Council of Ephesus. There it was decided that our Lord Jesus was Lord and Christ from the first moment when He became Incarnate, that Christ was God and Man, that therefore our Lord Jesus was God and Man from the first moment when He began to be human, and that hence there was no true sense in which it could be said that the Blessed Virgin was mother *only* of His human nature, because she was mother of that human nature which was inseparably incorporated with the Divine. Nestorius tried to escape the logical consequence of his opinion by declaring his belief that though the Blessed Virgin was not Theotokos, "Mother of God," she was yet Christokos, "Mother of Christ:" but in this he was (intentionally or not) disguising his principles, as, of course, it would be blasphemy similar to that of Arius himself to say that Christ was ever Man only. He was, in fact, seduced into an over-refinement of doctrine, much of the same nature with that over-refinement which has led to the Romish doctrine of Transubstantiation; and was attempting to explain to the understanding what must be a mystery until our understanding is elevated above its present capacity. The Church, on the other hand, was resolute in maintaining the old theory which is shown in the words "the mother of my Lord," used by Elizabeth to the Blessed Virgin six months before the birth of Jesus, and in taking "Lord" in the sense in which

it was taken by St. Thomas, when he said "My Lord and my God." The Council of Ephesus, therefore, decided that it was a dishonour to our Lord's Divine Nature to refuse the title "Theotokos," or "Mother of God," to her who was the mother of Him who is God and Man. The Emperor banished Nestorius, and he died in exile eight years afterwards. Perhaps, like many controversialists, he was hardly aware of the dreadful lengths to which his principles would lead if they were fairly argued out to their consequences. But it was his own fault that he was misled.

IV. *The Council of Chalcedon and the Eutychian Heresy.*

One extreme mostly tends to drive men to another. The recoil from Nestorianism carried some defenders of the opposite doctrine into asserting that our Lord's nature was Divine only. Eutyches, who originated this opinion, was abbot of a monastery near Constantinople, and his followers are called Eutychians or Monophysites, the latter being a word compounded of the two Greek words *monos* and *phūsis*, a single nature.

The Council of Chalcedon was called on account of this heresy, which was as dreadful in one direction as that of Arius had been in the other: for to assert that our Lord is God alone, is to assert that there is no "Mediator between God and man, the Man

Christ Jesus." Six hundred and thirty Bishops met at this Council, which was called in the year 451; but though they condemned the errors of Eutyches and his followers, it was considered that the already venerable Creed of Nicæa was a sufficient statement of the true and Scriptural doctrine on the subject: nor does the heresy appear ever to have revived to any great extent after this condemnation, though still existing in the East.

Thus, in the four first General Councils we find the means used by God in His Providence for establishing the doctrine of the Church. At Nicæa it was decided that Holy Scripture reveals to us (and that Christians until then had ever believed Holy Scripture in such a sense) that our Lord Jesus Christ is God, the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity. At Constantinople, that the Holy Ghost is God, the Third Person in the Holy Trinity. At Ephesus, it was established that our Lord Jesus Christ has ever been God and Man from the first moment in which He began to take our human nature upon Him of the substance of His Virgin Mother. And at Chalcedon, what would seem the last stronghold of error respecting our Lord's Nature and Person was overthrown, and it was declared that Christ was God of the substance of His Father, and

Man of the substance of His Mother, Perfect God and Perfect Man.

But our Lord Himself had predicted that the tares should grow with the wheat until the harvest, and so it has been that these errors so refuted have never been without a generation of supporters. The truths that have been proved, and the errors that have been confuted, twelve or fourteen hundred years ago, have to be proved and refuted over again through the daring ignorance of those who are seduced by the pleasures of controversy. It is well for us, therefore, to have a general knowledge of the direction in which the various fundamental heresies of the Christian world have run; and to know what those truths are which the experience of past ages has shown to be of essential importance. Knowledge of this kind will teach us to value highly such statements of belief as are contained in the three Creeds, and we shall understand that no words have been used in them without a special purpose and meaning. Even a single letter is of value, as was proved in the Arian controversy, when homo-ousion and homoi-ousion were the representatives of wholly opposite principles and creeds respecting our Lord and Saviour. And when we sing the short creed, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be," the words will not seem of slight consequence

if we are acquainted with the manner in which they have come to be a declaration of the true faith, and a protest against errors that have seduced thousands of souls, and led them to "deny the Lord who bought" them.

NOTE.

As other Councils are often mentioned in history, and especially referred to by Romanists, it should be mentioned that many are called General Councils by Rome which have no real claim to be considered so. Two which followed the above four are allowed to be general by some sound English theologians, as Dr. Hammond, but not by others, as Hooker. They were held at Constantinople in A.D. 553 and A.D. 680. Another held there in A.D. 869 is also considered as a General Council (before the division of the Eastern and Western Churches) by Romish writers. Such Councils as those named from the Lateran (the place of meeting), the Council of Florence, or the Council of Trent, may have been very respectable meetings of Bishops, but they were not *General* Councils, and do not claim our respect or obedience as such. The Eastern world of Christendom has never been actually represented at any of them and, as is well known, no English Bishop whatever appeared at Trent.

CHAPTER V.

THE BREAKING UP OF EARLY CHRISTIAN UNITY.

THE Unity of the Church is a subject which has more often been discussed under the influence of feeling and imagination, than with historical literalness and acumen. The mind which is offended by the divisions of modern Christendom looks back to former days with pain and regret: it reads that there was a saying of the heathen, "Behold how these Christians love one another," that letters of commendation were habitually given to the members of one Church as a passport of admission for them into another; it meditates upon the grand unity of system, by means of which three or five hundred Bishops could be brought together for consultation on matters connected with the general peace, the unity of the belief, and the common good of the Church; and then it turns round and calls up a picture of a divided East and West, of European and English Christianity, and it asks, "Have we not cause for mourning and

shame that such a change should be?" Perhaps the picture of Unity in the days of old is somewhat magnified by such a mind, that of division in the present time somewhat distorted.

Again, the Roman Catholic theory of Unity compels every Roman Catholic to look on the question with a mind pre-occupied by the foregone conclusion that Papal supremacy is essentially the root of Unity, and therefore must have been so in primitive times. He is consequently so biassed against any theory of Unity which does not make that its centre, and against all who have acted, or now act, on such theories—the whole Eastern Church, for instance, in ancient days, and the whole Anglican Church in modern—that it is almost impossible for him to be an historian without being a strong partisan.

There is, too, a class of minds which can imagine so many advantages in the entire independence and even isolation of each Christian community, that it is unable to trace out fairly even a broken outline of that actual and formal basis of union between the Churches of early days which the other two, each in their way, fill up as a perfect and solid superstructure, *totus, teres, atque rotundus.*

The Romanist opinion, that all Unity sprang originally from unity with the Bishop of Rome, or rather from an acknowledgment of and submission to his

supreme authority, is not only an opinion beyond the range of probability, but may be certainly disproved. It is an historical fact, that whatever respect was paid to the Church of Rome—as the chair of St. Peter, the Church of St. Paul's long care and ministration, the Church (beyond most others) of the Martyrs, and the Church which had been least torn by internal divisions and error—no extravagant authority or jurisdiction was either claimed or exercised by the Bishop of Rome during the first six centuries at least of the Christian era; that is up to the time of Gregory the Great. In another part of this volume, the reader will find some account of the manner in which the Papal supremacy did arise; but for our present purpose that account is unnecessary, and the Roman idea of the Unity of the Church was so unknown to the early ages of Christianity, that it has nothing to do with their *real* history, and may be put out of court.

Of what then did early Christian Unity consist, if there was no one visible centre towards which all parts of the Church converged, as there certainly was not, at least after the Apostolic age?

§. *The Unity of Sympathy.*

1. The oneness of Christians was in no small degree connected with their association together as a society sharply distinguished from all other religious bodies in the world. Wherever Christians were—in Judæa, in

Asia Minor, in Italy, among the Gothic nations of central Europe, in the far distant isles of Britain,—they were, by the very fact of their being Christians, divided off from the people of whom they outwardly formed an integral portion. Now, if you were to take a crowd of ten thousand men, and separate off, say one hundred, calling them out one by one, the very fact of that common separation would give to that hundred of men a bond of union which they did not possess before, when perhaps they were entire strangers to each other. Such was the position of Christians among the heathen nations of the world (though in a far larger proportion than that of one hundred to ten thousand), for three hundred years of the first existence of Christianity. And hence the Apostles frequently remind them of this fact of their separation, as when St. Paul so often writes to them as "called," and when St. Peter tells them they are a "chosen generation."

Nor was this separation a merely negative bond of union. Those who were every where separated, as a body, from the heathen, by their principles, were also bound together as a body by those principles. So perfectly had the Providential system worked by which God had spread His Church throughout the world, that in the most remote regions, and among the most ignorant classes, the fact of persons being Christians involved the knowledge of several fundamental principles and the

practice of several rites and usages. Of the latter, Holy Baptism may be mentioned; which, whether administered in the East or the West, the North or the South, was always uniformly administered in one unvarying form; and the variations in the celebration of the Eucharist were very slight, while the Eucharist itself was an ordinance of so peculiar a nature as to be a very distinctive mark of a peculiar and separate community without any consideration of its details. Of the former, too, the peculiar knowledge which Christians had, and the consequent belief in certain facts and principles with which the heathen had no acquaintance, and which were quite different from any with which they had—all this must have tended to knit them together, to say the least of it, much as a secret society produces a sort of fellowship among its members independent of all other ties and bonds.

Now it is clear that so far as this separation of Christians from those who were not Christians, by the distinctive peculiarities of their religion, constituted a bond of unity, that bond would be dissolved at the same time with the dissolution of the distinction, by the general spread of Christianity. The almost universal extension of Christianity was, therefore, the breaking up also of that distinctive unity which formed so strong a bond among Christians. A certain amount of secrecy which was connected with it had been a

means, as secrecy always is, of cementing people together, but Christianity was no longer a secret. The feelings had been enlisted on the side of fellowship by persecution, but persecution too passed away. When Christians ceased to be a class and became the world at large, they lost the unity which class interests give: when they ceased to be a persecuted class, they lost the unity which is inevitably built up on the strong sympathies of our nature.

The universal establishment of Christianity, therefore, and the cessation of the struggle between it and Paganism, were the first steps towards weakening the bonds by which the whole society of Christians had hitherto been one, because they abolished the distinctive position of Christianity as the religion of a class, and a persecuted religion.

§. *The Unity of Uniformity.*

2. There were, however, certain definite points in which the various bodies of Christians throughout the world maintained a ground of union with each other, and these belong to the period which followed the general establishment of Christianity as well as to the earlier centuries of its history. In Creeds and in Liturgies Christians every where spoke the same language, in the Episcopal system they owned one common constitution, and in the moral discipline of the Church they owned

for the most part the same laws; but of this latter nothing need be said at length.

This may be called the organic unity of the Church, and is, in reality, the only kind of unity in respect to which comparisons may be legitimately drawn between ancient and modern Christianity, early unity and modern disunion.

The Creed formed a basis of union of the most natural kind from the very first. It was impossible but that when men were desirous of turning from Judaism or Paganism to Christianity, they should be required to have some definite belief in the God whose servants they were going to become, and whose worship they were henceforth to practise. Accordingly in the very earliest years of the Church we find a convert declaring his faith to the clergyman who was about to baptize him, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God[1]," and in those letters which the martyr Ignatius wrote to his Christian friends on his last sad journey, and to which reference has been made in a previous section, the substance of many expressions shows that the Creed which we now call the "Apostles' Creed" was as familiar to the Christians of those days as it is to us at present. At first such a profession of faith was used in the Baptismal Service only, or chiefly, as we now use it

[1] Acts viii. 37.

there; but before long it was taken into the other services of the Church, the Christian confessing his faith not only at his first becoming a member of Christ, but on every occasion of his appearing openly as a Christian in the worship of the Christian's God. It is concluded by learned men, like Bishop Bull, Grabe, and Bingham, that all the articles of the Creed were received from the Apostolical age (and, therefore, in all probability from the Apostles themselves), except these three "the descent into hell," "the Holy Catholic Church," and "the communion of saints," and of these the evidence is not clear that the second and third at least were not in the oldest Apostolic versions of the Creed. How the Apostles' Creed came to be developed into the Nicene in consequence of heresy, has been shown in the last chapter; and respecting the hymn called the Athanasian Creed, no more need be said than that it contains the doctrine of the Church at the time when the Nicene Creed was framed, (in greater detail), and is of nearly as ancient a date.

The Creed therefore was, from the first, a bond of organic union among Christian Churches throughout the world. None was ever known to be without it: for though its form slightly varied in different Churches (perhaps through translation and re-translation), its substance always remained the same; and we have many forms of it still remaining to bear witness to the fact. If there had ever been in early days a community of

Christians which did not use the Creed as a bond of unity, it would so far have broken the oneness which the "one faith" makes; but such a community was not known for fifteen hundred years of the life of Christianity.

What has been said of the Creed may also be said of the Liturgy of the Church, by which is especially meant (what the Ecclesiastical word "Liturgeia" means) the Divine Service appointed for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Notwithstanding the reserve which was necessary in speaking of, or writing down, this service in an age of persecution, there is enough evidence left in the ancient writings of the early Church to show us that a set form was always in use for the celebration of the Holy Communion, and that though this form was not restricted to a perfect identity in every country, the general features of it were unvarying, especially the words and acts of Consecration. There appear to have been four great original Liturgies of the sub-Apostolic age, which regulated, respectively, the Ritual of Asia, Africa, the Western Church in the East and South of Europe, and that which was planted in France and Britain. It is also established on good historical evidence that the French and British Liturgy was borrowed from the Ephesian Church, and probably originated with St. John the Evangelist; while the names of St. James, St. Mark, and St. Peter are connected with the other

three[2]. It needs only to recall our own feelings towards our own Prayer Book to understand how real a bond of union the use of one common form of worship must have been among the Christians of ancient days; or to draw the parallel still closer, what our feelings would be, if in Canada, in the United States of America, in New Zealand or Australia, we recognized the same words, the same substantial service, as we had been accustomed to at home in England. And again, it may be remarked that any breaking up in this important kind of unity was unknown for fifteen centuries. In various languages every Church of every Christian country throughout the world had, without exception, its "Book of Common Prayer," as we now term it, containing invariably "an Order for Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion," and containing it of invariably the same substantial character. Of course, as it need hardly be added, the Bible was always used publicly in the services of every Church without exception, more in fact than it is now, as some of the old Service Books show[3].

[2] For a concise historical account of these Liturgies, see the "Annotated Book of Common Prayer," pp. 145—149.

[3] The bulky Breviaries and Missals of the Mediæval Church owe their size to the large proportion of Holy Scripture which they contain: the Lessons, as well as the Gospels and Epistles, being always printed at length, and not merely indicated by a calendar as in the Prayer Book. A mediæval Breviary was, in fact, a book of the same character as the modern "Church Service."

Again, the unity arising from an identity of constitution may be traced up through every age. It has been a great object with Presbyterians to prove that there were early communities of Christians which were constituted rather on the model of the Presbyterian than that of the Episcopal system; but their attempts at proof quite break down under criticism, and hosts of learned men have corroborated and illustrated the assertion of our Prayer Book: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." A Church without a Bishop was a contradiction of terms to the Christian of ancient days. It was the same to him as a Christianity without Christ —an impossibility. And no fact in all history is better established than this, that neither orthodox Christian, heretic, nor schismatic, ever established any religious community except on the Episcopal system before the days of Calvin in the sixteenth century of Christianity.

Thus in Creed, Prayers, and Constitution, all Christian societies of primitive times stood upon one basis, and that basis formed their most real bond of unity. The languages in which they worshipped, in which they recited their Creeds, might differ as much as English and Greek and Latin differ from each other, and there might be here and there some diversity of form, but the matter and

substance was undoubtedly the same: and thus a common devotional tongue bound them together, though their native languages were diverse: "Multæ terricolis linguæ cœlestibus una." And so also they were one in their religious constitution, though the Church in one country was under the savage tyranny of a cruel tyrant, in another under the rule of a mild and good sovereign: in one under the slavish system of Southern governments, in the other under the free rule which has mostly existed in Northern countries.

§. *How Unity was Broken, and to what Extent.*

It may now be fairly asked, if the early ages of Christianity thus presented a picture of real union existing on such real grounds, where was the disunion, and to what extent did separate Churches of Christendom break away from each other? What is to be said of heresy and schism in its effects upon this unity?

That Christians were always "men of like passions with us," and that there never was a time when they had not "differences of opinion" among themselves, must be fully conceded. The question is how far these differences of opinion affected whole communities of Christians as well as the individuals who entertained them: for it must be remembered that we are considering this matter as it concerns Churches, not as it bears on individuals.

Little actual breach was made in the unity of Christendom before the Arian heresy. How the fundamental faith of the Church was affected by this has already been shown: and it illustrates what has been said in the preceding pages, that the Creed (with the alteration of one letter by the Arians) was the rallying point on both sides;—even the Arians not pretending to maintain the Church on any Creedless basis, but only endeavouring to alter the established "form of sound words" so as to suit their own opinions. All heretics broke the unity of the Church so far as their own individual persons were concerned, and very often led many to follow them in their course of error, and to incur with them the penalty of excommunication. Not a few Eastern Bishops were guilty of falling into the errors of Arius, during that period when Arianism had gained favour at Court, and for a time the Arian Creed was forced upon their Churches, though no other change whatever seems to have been made. Such sin no doubt led (as every other sin brings a corresponding punishment) to the ultimate decadence of the Eastern Church, and to its overthrow in some places by the Mahometanism of a later day; but for the time the organic unity was restored by the epidemic Arianism of the age passing away, and the temporary breach in the faith of Christendom was healed. Similar language may be used of other heresies: but there are

communities in the East at the present day which still follow, in one case the errors of Nestorius, and in the other, those of Eutyches; and they are commonly known as the Nestorian and the Monothelite Christians.

Two great divisions there were indeed in the early Church, the Novatian schism and the Donatist, both of which originated at Carthage. The first of these was begun by two priests of nearly the same name, Novatus of Carthage and Novatian of Rome. The rise of Novatianism illustrates another of those fundamental points to which no allusion has yet been made: namely, the *discipline* of the Church. Early discipline was exceedingly strict. Christians who had in any way conformed to Paganism to save their lives, were ordinarily shut out from the Church for years, and only readmitted after showing signs of a true repentance; and such was the case also with those who had been excommunicated for other sins. But the Novatians denied the power of the Church to pronounce absolution at all on such sinners, and maintained that they should be permanently excluded from communion. Thus their schism, which began in extreme strictness, so that they were called Cathari or Puritans, as assuming to be a purer body than the Church, ended in becoming a heresy. They denied that Christ had power to forgive sins on earth, and eventually many of them became Arians also.

The Donatist schism also arose at Carthage, and was named after its founder Donatus. It likewise began in discontent at the re-admission to the Church of those who had shown weakness in the time of the Diocletian persecution, illustrating the fact which is shown in the history of those days as of the present, that the Church is the most tolerant and the most merciful of all religious communities. The Donatists appointed Bishops of their own, and much trouble often arose from their opposition to the Church and the lawfully appointed Bishops. They were vigorously opposed by St. Augustine, and his works are full of allusions to them. But eventually both these sects were re-absorbed into the Church. While they lasted they were so bitter against it as to re-baptize all Churchmen who entered their communion.

None of the heresies or schisms to which we have had occasion to refer caused any actual breach of communion between one Church and another. On various occasions official letters passed between different Churches and between their respective Bishops: as, for instance, between those of Rome and Carthage; persons who were in communion with one Church found themselves also in communion with another when their travels carried them away from home; and no one was shut out from any of the rights of fellowship because he belonged to a Church in another part of the world; for as yet the out-

ward bonds were not broken asunder—the Churches of the civilized world were still in the aggregate the Church of the Roman Empire.

The Empire itself was, however, beginning to dissolve into many independent kingdoms, and the political ties which had been used by God in His Providence as a means of consolidating Christianity, were now to be removed. With the removal of those ties there necessarily followed a certain amount of disintegration in the Christian body. The Church in North America and the Church in England were more apparently bound together, as there certainly was more ecclesiastical intercourse between them, when their members were subjects of one Sovereign than they have been since the declaration of independence broke asunder the ties of political allegiance, and established two separate nationalities where there had been only one before. Yet no one will deny that in the essential foundations of faith and worship, both Churches stand as they did before on one common basis, each having an orthodox Creed and an orthodox form of worship, as well as the Catholic system of government by Bishops. In the day when the Roman Empire broke to pieces (A.D. 476, under Romulus Augustulus) there was no past experience to build on by which men could see that the same outward unity of Christendom could not possibly continue under the new order of political arrangement

which God was bringing in, as had been always known under the old. Such a thing as the isolation of Churches must have seemed very wrong and very dreadful to those to whom it was so great a novelty; and it would naturally be a long while before they recognized either the necessity or the propriety of such isolation in any degree. For a time it seemed as if a substitute for the bond of universal empire might be found in an universal Bishop: and a grand idea it was that because Christ's kingdom was not of this world, therefore its oneness should not be affected by the breaking up of earthly kingdoms, but should be maintained by a spiritual supremacy which could penetrate them all, and preserve Christian unity in the midst of political and social division. But either this was not God's Divine will, or the sinfulness of men frustrated His purposes: for the universal jurisdiction of Rome was hardly claimed before it was resisted by the Church of the Eastern world; and jealousies went on so long, that at last all official intercourse was broken off between it and the Church of the Western world.

§. *The Separation of Eastern and Western Christendom.*

From the very foundation of Constantinople, New Rome as it was called, there had been considerable jealousy between the ecclesiastical heads of the rival cities: and as each city was the centre of its own

portion of the empire, the influence of these jealousies imperceptibly spread around to other dioceses. Combined with this we must also notice that there was a natural agglomeration of the various dioceses in the East and West respectively, which tended to make a rather sharply defined distinction between those portions of the Church. In the year 475, when the Western part of the empire fell into the hands of conquerors altogether unknown in the East, the geographical and political division began still more to influence the tendency towards separation: and towards the beginning of the seventh century the rival claims of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Bishop of Rome to the title of Universal Bishop widened the breach already begun.

Combined with these influences, and each aggravating the other, were two bitter controversies which in the end brought the separation to a climax, the first being a controversy about the lawful and unlawful use of images for religious purposes, the second about the addition of the words "and from the Son" in the article concerning the Holy Ghost which is contained in the Nicene Creed as completed by the Council of Constantinople.

§. *The Iconoclast Controversy.*

A very full history of the image controversy is given in one of the Homilies of the Church of England, "the

second part of the Sermon on the Peril of Idolatry," though the deductions drawn from the history given are of a more destructive tendency than most persons of taste and good sense would draw from it in our own day. The following is a summary of the controversy.

In the early ages of Christianity, sensitive minds were often in dread that the use of statuary in churches, would lead Christians into imitation of heathen usages: for there was hardly a statue among the heathen to which incense was not offered and libations of wine poured out, —acts of worship which were used towards the mere figure, because the person whom it represented most frequently had no existence whatever, and if such person ever existed, had no claim to this offering of worship. Hence sculpture was regarded with an unfavourable eye by many Christians of those early days, who felt that the Church (like the Jewish system) was surrounded on all sides by unmistakeable idolatry. While the Church was thus situated, there was probably only a minority of Christians who held the opinion on this subject which is commonly held in our own day, that sculpture may be innocently used in churches, wrong, wicked, and foolish as it would be to worship it[4].

[4] The same feeling operated towards the decline of classical learning. Gregory the Great (A.D. 600) is accused of destroying the last remains of the Imperial Library at Rome; and whether the accusation is true or not, it is certain that he had a great aversion to heathen writings, and forbad the reading of any thing connected with mythology.

This horror of sculpture decoration among so many of the early Christians was thus partly caused by the sight of idolatry going on all around them; and partly no doubt by that lingering of Judaism by which the Eastern Churches especially were so long influenced. It also seems to have been combined with a reverent fear of debasing our ideas of the Object of Worship by what must necessarily be an imperfect representation of It. So the Council of Elvira, in Spain, decreed, A.D. 306, "That no images should be in the Church, lest that which is worshipped and adored should be painted on the walls;" and hence the representation of our Lord in the paintings which decorate the walls of the catacombs, under the figure of a Lamb, a Shepherd, or by some Christian version of a heathen myth, as in the figure of Apollo. Yet, very early paintings and statues did exist, which show that this feeling was not universal. Irenæus speaks of statues of our Lord (which he supposed to have been executed by order of Pontius Pilate), without any reprobation[5]. Eusebius speaks of bronze statues of our Lord and the Syrophœnician woman which he had seen standing at Cæsarea Philippi[6]; and though he had some doubt as to their identity, does not even hint that the use of such figures was reprehensible. He also says that he had seen paintings of St. Peter, St. Paul,

[5] Adv. Hær. i. 24.

[6] Eccl. Hist. vii. 18.

and our Lord; and the tradition that St. Luke was a painter, and that he had painted portraits of our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin is as old as the fifth century [7]. In the same century also, Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, caused the walls of his cathedral to be decorated with paintings of Scripture subjects; and Prudentius, the great Christian poet of that age, refers in one of his hymns to similar paintings. There was, however, sufficient ground for opposition to the religious use of sculpture in the opinions of Christians of early ages, to form a large basis for party quarrelling and fanaticism after the causes which had influenced those opinions had passed away. Here and there a bishop was found whose personal feelings on the subject overcame his official discretion. Epiphanius, the Bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, tore down the chancel door-curtain of some church, because it was embroidered with "the figure of Christ or some other saint," he did not observe which, and he thought it was "contrary to the authority of the Scriptures to have the figure of a man hanging in the Church of Christ;" though how he made out his Scriptural justification for his conduct the good bishop has not left on record. This was about the end of the fifth century. In the beginning of the seventh, we find Severus, Bishop of Marseilles, destroying

7 Theodor. Lector. Collectan. l. i. init.

all the images which came within reach, much to the disgust of his flock; on which Grégory the Great shrewdly told him that to worship images was undoubtedly wrong, and he hoped none of his people would do so, "but," he added, with a touch of gentle sarcasm, "you should have kept the images, brother, and prevented the people from worshipping them."

Party spirit and fanaticism on both sides reached their height, however, in the eighth century. Since the breaking up of the Roman Empire in the West, the lower or Greek Empire had been maintained in the East, over which the Emperor Leo III., surnamed "the Isaurian" was reigning in the year 730. This Emperor was so infatuated against the use of images, or was so under the influence of others who were, that his conduct caused Italy, Venice, and Ravenna, to relinquish the nominal allegiance which they had hitherto acknowledged to the Greek Emperors, and they refused to pay tribute any longer. Even the Patriarch of Constantinople and his clergy remonstrated against his violent edict for the removal of images. Leo, who had been a common soldier, was also very ignorant, and, in consequence of his ignorance, very obstinate; he deposed the Patriarch, slaughtered the people when they tried to preserve the sculptured decorations of their churches, was defeated before Ravenna, in his endeavour to recover

Italy, and ended by leaving a legacy of bitterness to his family and the Church.

The son of Leo, Constantine Copronymus (a name best left untranslated) was as furious an Iconoclast as his father. He assembled a council of Eastern Bishops, 338 in number, at Constantinople, and prevailed on them to make certain swingeing canons on the subject. The art of painting was from the Evil One, and the art of sculpture could not therefore have a better origin, which was very good logic if it had not been wanting in premises. All images and paintings were to be destroyed, every bishop or clergyman thereafter possessing any was to be deposed, and lay offenders, after being excommunicated, were to be handed over to the civil power for further punishment; a kind of decision which reminds one strongly of the synodal acts by which Puritans and Presbyterians have made it unlawful to walk on Sunday, and penal to sing to the playing of organs.

This destructive spirit was fostered by several successive Emperors, till at last a recoil took place, when thirty-two years afterwards, in 786, a council on the subject met at Nicæa, which is known as the Second (or Deutero-) Nicene Council, though far from deserving to be numbered with the first. At this council the proceedings of its Iconoclast predecessor were reversed, and the defence of images was carried to so extravagant a

length as to secure for this Deutero-Nicene Council the unenviable fame of having officially introduced and sanctioned the practice of image-worship. Probably it was carried to this extreme by the desire to avoid the Judaism which so influenced the Eastern Churches, and the Mahometanism which was beginning to overrun them; both Jews and Mahometans exhibiting their bitter hostility to Christ by a special hatred of His image, and the images of His saints. The extravagant recoil of the image defenders was resisted by many in the Western world who wished to maintain the sensible course of keeping the images without worshipping them, which had been recommended by St. Gregory. The bishops and nobles of England protested against it. Alcuin, the greatest scholar of his age (a Yorkshireman), wrote against it, and influenced his pupil Charlemagne to oppose Rome on the subject, and to hold provincial councils at Paris, Frankfort, Mayence, and other places, in which image-worship was condemned. There is some room for doubting whether the dispute between the Deutero-Nicene Council and those who wished sculpture to be retained in churches was really more than a contest of words, as it seems incredible that hundreds of bishops should agree together in encouraging an usage so distinctly forbidden as the actual worship of that which is not God. The obscurity which hangs about our own English word "worship" (as in the Marriage Service,

"With my body I thee *worship*," where certainly no idolatry is intended), seems to indicate that there may be room for charity in respect to this council; and the singular passion which multitudes of otherwise good Christians have shown for the use of images and paintings in acts of worship may, perhaps, bear a charitable construction on some analogous ground, if it cannot be explained to our entire satisfaction, as it certainly seems impossible to explain it.

The Iconoclast, or image-breaking, controversy was one of the means by which the last link of the chain whereby Rome had been politically bound to the East was broken; and very little ecclesiastical intercourse was maintained afterwards. At the same time Eastern Christendom and Western Christendom were in unhindered communion of faith and practice with each other, though that communion was seldom ratified or exhibited by public ecclesiastical acts. It remained for another controversy to alter this silent and passive communion into active hostility; to break asunder the two halves of Christendom, so that they have never again been welded together in outward union.

§. *The Controversy respecting the Double Procession of the Holy Ghost.*

Before giving an historical account of this controversy and its consequences, a few words may be necessary in

explanation of the subject of it, and indeed of the very word "Procession" so intimately connected with it.

In the Nicene Creed, as we use it in our Communion Service, and as all the Churches owning Rome for their head also use it, we say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost. . . . . Who proceedeth from the Father and Son." In the Athanasian Creed we say, "The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but *proceeding*." In the Litany, we pray, "O God the Holy Ghost, *proceeding* from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us[8]."

The use of the word "proceeding" is also Scriptural, as when our Lord promises to send the Comforter, "even the Spirit of Truth, which *proceedeth* from the Father."

The meaning of the term "procession" as thus applied to God the Holy Ghost, is best taken as referring to the manner in which He began and continued to take part in the work of man's salvation, rather than to the abstract existence of the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, and His abstract relation to the other persons thereof. That is, if we take the term to mean that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son in His office of Comforter, we shall be taking so much of

[8] In the ancient English Litany, before 1544, "proceeding from the Father and the Son" was omitted; so that, as far as words go, our Reformed Church more distinctly avers the doctrine than it did in pre-Reformation days.

the sense which the words will bear as will be sufficient for the ordinary understanding of Christian doctrine; and we need not perplex our minds with thoughts of the mystery of eternal relation between the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity and the other two, independently of their work and relation towards man.

Having thus explained the word Procession, it remains to be said by way of preliminary statement as to the subject of the controversy, that the Council of Nicæa ended the Creed with the words "And in the Holy Ghost," that the Council of Constantinople added the remainder of the Creed as we now have it, except that they left it standing in the words "proceeding from the Father," instead of as we now say, "proceeding from the Father *and the Son*." The words in italics were the subject of the controversy, the Western Church using them, and inserting them in their written Creeds, the Eastern Church refusing to do so, and appealing to the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431), which had decreed that as they had found the Constantinopolitan Creed sufficient to meet the heresy on account of which they had been summoned, so no addition should thenceforward be made to the words in which that Creed was framed.

It appears to have been in the fifth century that this question first arose between the Eastern and the Western Church, at first through individual assertion on one side

and dispute on the other, and before long by the actual introduction of the words, "and from the Son," in singing the Creed at Divine Service. So late as the ninth century, however, an appeal was made on the subject to Pope Leo III., and having consulted a provincial council, he decided that it was not lawful to make such an addition to the Creed: and he caused the Constantinopolitan form to be engraved on silver plates in the Latin and Greek languages, that they might be preserved as an accurate standard of the true and exact words used at the council by which the Creed was set forth. Not long afterwards, however, another Pope, Nicolas I., roused the controversy again, and about the end of the ninth century a council was held at Constantinople, when it was decreed that the addition should be disused. For about a hundred and fifty years, there was such a peace as has been before referred to between East and West, a passive state of non-interference; but in the year 1053 the controversy was again aroused: Leo IX. summoned a council at Rome, and excommunicated the Eastern Churches in a body. Three Roman legates were afterwards sent to Constantinople to re-open negotiations for peace; but they ended by laying upon the altar of St. Sophia a solemn deed, in which the Patriarch and all who adhered to him were once more and finally excommunicated by Rome. When the legates had left, shaking off the dust of their feet, the Patriarch sum-

moned a council, and retorted the excommunication; and from that time to this (with the exception of two attempts at reconciliation made by the Eastern Church, the first in 1274, and the second at the Council of Florence, A.D. 1450) there has been no intercourse, public or otherwise, between the Churches of the East (including that of Russia), and those which acknowledge the Roman Pontiff for their head [9].

And yet one would fain hope, and lead others also to hope, that, in the words of a great bishop of our own day, "the discrepancy is one of words, for the Greeks confess that the Spirit is not only the Spirit of the Father, but of the Son; that He has the same substance, divinity, and majesty as the Father and the Son; that He receives of the Son, and so cannot speak of Himself; that He is manifested and given to us by the Son; and therefore we may charitably conclude, that while, from a veneration for the Councils of Nicæa and Constantinople, they wish to keep the Creed untouched, they do in fact maintain that truth so necessary to salvation [1]." Much of the bitterness of this controversy sprang from a

[9] It should be mentioned that the present Pope, Pius IX., wrote an "Encyclical Letter to the Easterns," in 1848, exhorting them to union; but as he required it on the terms of entire submission to his supremacy, his overtures were very properly rejected. There have also been more friendly relations between the Russian Church and Rome during the reign of Pius IX. than at any former period.

[1] Forbes on Nicene Creed, p. 263.

want of patience with and toleration for the idiosyncracies of national character. The Eastern mind is peculiarly averse to change, especially in any thing connected with religion. Of this we have an example in the typical forms which are adopted for their pictorial representations of holy persons, which have not varied for centuries. There was much of this stiff adherence to ancient forms in that refusal to accept the insertion of the words in the Creed out of which the controversy arose; in fact little more than this, for they hold the doctrine, though they reject the words. The Roman Church, on the other hand, has ever been intolerant of any variation from its own standard originating with others, while it has been comparatively free in making alterations in that standard from time to time.

Perhaps we may take a lesson for modern times from this example. If the Roman Church is intolerant of what it calls Anglican dryness and rationality, is not the Anglican intolerant of a dogmatism and imaginative religion which suits Southern minds of the truest religious cast, though not suiting those of our more Northern temperament?

And one may fain hope also, in concluding these remarks on the division of East and West, that the separation is more outward and apparent than real and substantial. One may fain hope that change of language, change of habit, territorial alterations, and many other

such causes, have contributed largely to maintain that separation, and that we have been accustomed somewhat to overrate the power and the results of the controversial disputes which have been here narrated. The organic ties of constitution, liturgy, and substantial doctrine have never been sundered. The real basis of Christianity still remains a common basis to both the East and the West. Practical piety is the fruit of such Christianity in both: and we may trust that each communion has been sending millions of souls to heaven during the whole period of their seeming separation from each other. The fact is, that where that organic unity is maintained by which a true succession of ministers is kept up from age to age, and the true administration of the Sacraments through them, there are strong cords of union which bind each to God's kingdom above. However the lateral ties may be sundered, that union is more solid and true than all; and those who were strangers to each other, members of separated Churches in the East and in the West, while on earth, will find that there was still the essence of union existing, which has been the means of bringing them together in the one Church above. Those whom God has joined together by such inner ties, man cannot, if he would, sunder, by cutting away the outer cords by which visible unity was maintained.

CHAPTER VI.

MAHOMETANISM.

We have now to deal with the history and principles of that great Eclectic religion which was set up to rival Christianity in the early days of its triumph over Paganism, that is, in the beginning of the seventh century; and which at the present day numbers nearly one hundred millions of disciples. Paganism and heresy having each been defeated, a giant foe took the field in the form of Mahometanism, in which truth and error were so blended as to seem to offer a new religion calculated to supplant Christianity, as Christianity had supplanted all other religions.

The soil in which this novel religion took its rise was one well adapted for the purpose. Arabia had never been really conquered by any of the world's Emperors, and as little by the Romans as by any of the great powers which had preceded them. In consequence of this, Christianity had never so far penetrated into the desert as to bring its tribes under subjection to the

truth: I say in consequence, for the temporal dominion of ambitious conquerors was one chief means by which the Providence of God caused the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ. Neither Greek nor Roman Paganism had obtained any sway over the minds of the desert tribes, any more than the military power of those nations had over their bodies. The Arabians preserved a tolerably accurate tradition of their existence as a free nation from the days of Abraham and Ishmael: and their religion appears to have been derived from a period as remote, for it was a compound of the ancient Sabæan religion, which was that of Mesopotamia at the time when it was the dwelling-place of Terah the father of Abraham, and of the patriarchal religion of which we seem to have a new founder in Abraham himself. The Sabæan religion consisted at first in the worship of the "host of heaven," the sun, moon, and stars, without the use of idols; but afterwards images were made to represent them, and in Joshua xxiv. 2—14 we find Terah mentioned as an idolater. Laban also used idols while Jacob was in his family: and idols were in use among the descendants of Ishmael until the time of Mahomet. As the Ishmaelite descendants of Abraham were never brought within the Jewish covenant, their religion, so far as it was true, would necessarily be that of Abraham, not of Moses. And so far as it was false

it would be of that Sabæan character which I have just mentioned. A mixture of this kind, in which Abrahamic traditions and a very corrupt form of Sabæanism were the principal elements, appears to have been the actual religion of Arabia, unaffected in the mass by Christianity, at the time when Mahomet arose. The new religion, therefore, sprang up in a soil which had already given birth to an Eclecticism in which there were probably more ancient primeval or patriarchal ingredients than in any of the known Pagan systems; and the fact is suggestive as well as curious, though we may not be able to trace the action of the old Eclecticism in originating its much more influential successor.

Nor was Mahometanism altogether the first attempt at the suppression of Christianity by a combination of portions of the Christian with portions of other systems. In a previous chapter some account has been given of the Gnostics, by whom such an attempt was made. It may also be mentioned that there was a general hint of such a system in the Roman policy of toleration; and that this hint became singularly definite in the time of Alexander Severus (A.D. 230), who set up the statues of *Abraham*, Orpheus, Alexander the Great, and *our Lord*, in his private pantheon as the objects of his worship. But the great precursor of Mahometanism was no doubt the heresy of the Manichees, concerning which so much is to be found in the writings of St.

Augustine, and which had spread itself very extensively in Persia, and perhaps in Arabia. This was an attempt to combine with some parts of Christianity portions of a philosophical theology founded on that Persian system which seems to have had so much influence on Gnosticism. We need not go into any account of Manicheeism, for except to theological readers such an account would be very uninteresting; but it may be mentioned that a striking similarity is found between the pretensions of Manes[1] and those of Mahomet in one particular, for each of them claimed to be that Paraclete whom our Lord had promised to send after His Ascension, and each claimed—as Paraclete—to found a dispensation of which Christianity was to be considered only the precursor.

Mahomet was born of parents who belonged to an Arabian tribe which claimed a descent from Joktan the son of Eber[2], and not from Ishmael. This tribe went by the name of the Koreish, and they were considered "Araba el Araba," as St. Paul declared himself an "Hebrew of the Hebrews," on account of the purity of their blood. Some years before the time of Ma-

[1] Archbishop Ussher has shown that *Manes* in Greek and *Mani* in Persian are identical with the Hebrew word *Menahem*, which signifies "The Comforter." The Manichees rejected the Acts of the Apostles, because they believed that the Holy Ghost had not descended until the time of Manes, their founder.

[2] Gen. x. 25—29.

homet's public life, there had been signs of dissatisfaction among some members of this tribe, with the religion then current, and they craved after one more in accordance with "the religion of Abraham." Four are especially remembered by name—Waraca, Othman, Obayd Allah, and Zayd—who were thus seeking for some higher faith than the superstition in which they had been brought up. The two first of these shortly became Christians; the third, after he had been for a time seduced into being a follower of Mahomet. The fourth, Zayd, became a great reformer of Arabian religion at Mecca, proclaiming the Unity of God, and denouncing idolatry; and he probably laid the foundation of the better parts of Mahometanism, though he was murdered before he could obtain an interview with Mahomet himself.

It was in the year 569 of the Christian era that Mahomet was born, about 609 (five years after the death of St. Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury) that he declared himself to be the Prophet of God, and in 632 that he died.

Mahomet belonged, as has been already said, to the tribe of the Koreish, and to the family of the Hashemites, who were considered the most illustrious members of the tribe, and to whom the care of the temple at Mecca (ancient when Mahomet was born) was entrusted. His father dying while Mahomet was young, the boy was

brought up by an uncle, named Abu Thaleb, who was, like most of the tribe, a merchant engaged in exchanging the fruit, spices, and perfumes of Arabia, for the corn and other productions of more temperate lands. It is doubtful whether Mahomet was ever able to read and write, but it is on record that he became a very early proficient in the kind of commerce in which his uncle was engaged. As soon as he reached manhood, he became factor, agent, and commercial traveller to a rich widow, who carried on the trade of her deceased husband; and the cleverness of Mahomet in this occupation was so satisfactory to the rich Kadijah, that she proposed to him to become her husband; when both Mahomet and Kadijah seem to have retired from business with an immense fortune, the age of the adventurer being now twenty-five and that of his rich wife forty. Up to this period he appears in the character of a mere adventurer of a very ordinary sort; but it seems probable that his rapid accession to position and fortune aroused an ambition for still greater success, and that this, combined with a certain religiousness of disposition, according to the current religion of Mecca at that time, influenced him to undertake the imposture on which his subsequent greatness was founded. As Mahometanism is a mixture of truth and error, so the character of its founder seems to have been far from being one of unmixed evil: and at the beginning of his career he was

neither the voluptuary nor the impostor that he afterwards became. It would seem, indeed, that, like Zayd, he began with looking for a higher and more truly devotional system of religion than that by which he was surrounded; that asceticism and excess of self-contemplation led him on to wild notions of his own mission as a religious reformer within the limited circle of his own acquaintance and city; that the idea of religious reformation became transmuted by success into that of an universal new religion; and that the necessities of his advanced movements made Mahomet far more of an impostor than he had been in a more limited sphere, while his asceticism and religious character broke down under the intoxication of his enormous success.

There was an interval of some years between the marriage of the young Mahomet with the mature Kadijah and his assumption of the office of prophet. For thirteen years, in fact, we have little or no clue to his mode of life, and he is thirty-eight years of age before we see the beginning of that career which subsequently opened out for him. From that age until forty he was known to retire frequently to a cave near Mecca, called the cave of Hira, where it is said that he practised great mortifications as a preparation for his office; and at the end of that time he declared himself to his now aged wife and some others of his family as a prophet of God. Three years more passed, and the

circle of his adherents was widened by his open proclamation of himself as a prophet entrusted with a great mission to all the family of Hashem, and in his forty-fourth year Mahomet declared publicly to the people of Mecca that he had been sent by God to reform their religion and to put down the idolatry of the city. At first he was met by ridicule and insult; but a religious reformer who shows himself to be in earnest will not long want adherents, and in a few months those of Mahomet began so to increase, that the supporters of the old religion were alarmed, and became fierce opponents of him and his pretensions, endeavouring to put him to death. In consequence of this opposition, he sought refuge in a town called Tayef, not very far distant from Mecca, where he continued to make proselytes by preaching his new religion—for it was now developing—to his neighbours, and to the caravans which travelled to Mecca. He afterwards returned to Mecca, until compelled by an insurrection which his preaching had aroused to fly for his life to Yatreb, or Medina. This flight began on July 16th, 622, and that day has been the era from which all Mussulman chronology is reckoned since the days of Mahomet, so that an event by our computation Anno Domini 1866 is by the Mahometans (after July) reckoned in the 1283rd year of the Hegira or Flight[3].

[3] There are only 354 days in the Mahometan year, which accounts for the discrepancy in the number of years between the Christian and the

The city to which Mahomet fled had been in no small degree prepared for his reception. Pilgrims had come from thence to Mecca, and had heard of the fame of Mahomet. The city of Yatreb, or Medina, had been originally "occupied by two tribes, one of idolatrous Arabs, and one of Jews. A fierce war arose between the rival races: it terminated in the defeat of the Jews, who were reduced to slavery. Amid their sufferings they were frequently heard to exclaim, 'Oh! if the appointed time of the Messiah had arrived, we would seek Him, and He would deliver us from this tyranny.' When the Medinese pilgrims heard the account of the new prophet at Mecca, they said to one another, 'Can this be the Messiah of whom the Jews are constantly speaking? Let us find him out, and gain him over to our interests.' Mahomet at once saw what an advantage he had gained by such a prepossession; he declared that he was the person whom the Jews expected, but that his mission was not confined to a single people, for all who believed in God and His prophet should share its advantages[4]."

It was probably from this time that Mahomet began to be an intentional impostor, claiming to be far more than a reformer of religion; and it is a significant fact

Mahometan reckoning of the interval between A.D. 622 and the present time. 100 Christian are equal to about 103 Mahometan years.

[4] Taylor's History of Mohammedanism, p. 105.

that the chronology of the great Antichristian imposture which he founded should be reckoned, not from the time when he showed himself in the character of a reforming servant of God, but from a period thirteen years later, when his assumptions were of a much less excusable kind, if they were not indeed thoroughly blasphemous, as they seem to have been.

It was about this period of Mahomet's career that the Koran began to be produced as an authority. He had declared in the first instance that he had received a message from God by Gabriel; and that pretended message was succeeded by many others. These were taken down from the lips of Mahomet, and written on bones or on palm-leaves, and when collected formed the Koran, a book which holds the same place in the estimation of Mahometans that the Holy Bible does among Christians. It is said to be very beautiful reading in the original Arabic in which it is written, but in English a great part of it is imbecile nonsense, some of it is grossly immoral and profane, and the whole bears a strong mark of its being what it is, an imposture. This book was written down by the companions of Mahomet at various periods during the course of his public life; and portions of it show that he had an imperfect acquaintance with Old Testament history, and with the facts of the Gospel[5]: but all is grossly dis-

[5] It is believed that Mahomet derived the Old Testament element of

torted, and ludicrous fables are added on to some of the most solemn histories of Holy Writ. The great burden of the book is that Mahomet is the prophet of God. Our Blessed Lord is named, as is also the Virgin Mary, His mother; but the miraculous conception and the birth of the holy Jesus are denied, and He is declared to be the Son of Joseph as well as of Mary. To win the support of ignorant Christians, it is allowed that Jesus was a Prophet, but only in a very inferior degree to Mahomet; the latter and not the former being set forth as the great centre, next to God Himself, of the religious system inculcated in the book. With such a principle as this, it is of very little consequence to us Christians what good may be found in the Koran. It is utterly impossible for us to entertain any respect for that as a whole of which this atrocious blasphemy forms a part; and we ought no more to receive any words of morality (if there are such) as reliable maxims, when they come from one who could invent or adopt such abominable falsehoods respecting God, than we could accept them from him who can upon occasion transform himself into an angel of light. It is a pecu-

the Koran from a Persian Jew named Abdallah Ibu Salaam; and the Christian element from a Nestorian monk of Bostra known by the various names of George, Sergius, and Bahari. He seems to have been better acquainted with the apocryphal Gospels (little known to any modern Christians except the learned) than with those of the New Testament.

liarity of Mahometanism that it wages a stern war against idolatry; and this is often, in connexion with its recognition of our Lord as a Prophet, urged in its favour. But it should rather be considered that this is a peculiar and dangerous part of the system; for that system cannot be one whit more worthy of respect than idolatry itself, which places a man like Mahomet above the holy and immaculate Jesus. This feature of the Koran has been so gently treated, and so misrepresented, in modern times, that strong and indignant language is necessary to put the matter in a clear light before the reader. The holiness and majesty of our Lord are so unapproachable, that it is sheer blasphemy for any man, however holy, to be accounted as even *equal*, not to say *superior*, to Him; and that blasphemy becomes worse, if possible, when the man so exalted is one like Mahomet, a gross sensualist, a forger of unmitigated lies, and an unhesitating murderer.

In such a character it was that Mahomet showed himself in the years of his success, and to the history of those years we will now return.

The flight to Yatreb was the turning point of his career. Hitherto he had been little more than a private man, and his scheme of a new religion had not come before the world at large in any very definite form; but from this time the private man became the head of a nation and of a hierarchical system. The religion

which he had already begun to found now took shape as a form of doctrine, worship, and morals; and mosques began to be erected in which it might have a local habitation.

The citizens of Yatreb were predisposed in favour of Mahomet, and showed as much eagerness to receive him as those of Mecca had shown to get rid of him. They welcomed him to their city in procession as their sovereign and religious head, and changed its name from Yatreb to Medinet-al-Nabi, the City of the Prophet, by which latter name, contracted to Medina among ourselves, it has ever since been known. Then began the military character of the new religion, a character which essentially belonged to it for a very long period. Christianity mastered the world before a single sword was drawn even in its defence, but Mahometanism was propagated by violence from the beginning.

At first the new "prophet" had but a small band of about three hundred military followers, but with these he made a successful raid on a caravan of the rich produce of Arabia, which was proceeding from Mecca to Syria under the escort of a thousand soldiers, headed by Abu Sophian, the successor of Abu Taleb, in what was practically the sovereignty of Mecca. The small force of Mahomet was on the point of being defeated, when he pretended to have had an interview with the angel Gabriel, and throwing a handful of sand towards the

Meccans, with the exclamation, "May their faces be confounded!" his followers concluded that a miracle was being wrought in their favour, and with the fierceness which such a persuasion has always given men in battle, they made a fresh onslaught, which ended in the total rout of those who had opposed them, and the capture of an immense booty. This success led Mahomet to assume a much more haughty position, and, as Cromwell did in a later age, he now pretended to be guided by special revelations from heaven in all his undertakings.

A second encounter between Abu Sophian and Mahomet in the following year ended in the defeat of the latter; but as the advantage was not followed up, each party remained in strong force, and for a time the whole of Arabia became the arena of most horrible petty warfare, in which plunder and murder were the objects of both sides. Then came the siege of Medina by the Meccans, which ended in a truce between Mahomet and his opponets for the long period of ten years.

The prophet then began to plunder and slay the rich Jews who thronged the towns within his reach; and by this means obtained great treasure for his further proceedings. Some he caused to be privately assassinated by small bands of his followers who presented themselves as guests, and became the murderers of their entertainers. By this means Mahomet gradually advanced towards Mecca, increasing his numbers and his wealth,

without actually breaking the treaty which had been made between him and the army of Mecca. Then he found a pretence for invading the city itself, declaring that the truce had been broken by his opponents; but as he was now at the head of an army which numbered ten thousand men, the city surrendered to him on condition of his not entering it for a year, and of his followers meanwhile performing their pilgrimages to the Kaaba unarmed with any weapon but their swords. During the interval, the false prophet employed himself in extending his conquests over neighbouring tribes, and especially in subduing and plundering the Jews; and he also sent ambassadors to Persia, Constantinople, and Ethiopia, inviting monarchs and people to adopt his new religion. The King of Ethiopia was ready to become a convert, the Emperor of Constantinople, Heraclius, returned a politic but indifferent answer: and only the Persian sovereign showed indignation at the effrontery of the adventurer. He, however, tore in pieces the letter, and denounced the message as insolent: "Thus may Allah tear his kingdom," was the reply of Mahomet.

When the time came for Mahomet to visit Mecca, he entered the city in the twofold character of conqueror and religious reformer. His first act was to go to the Kaaba, the ancient temple of the Arabians, and cause all the three hundred and sixty idols to be destroyed;

laying his hand on each, and saying, "Truth has come, let falsehood disappear." His opposition to idolatry was always consistent and energetic; and it must be considered as one of those good principles, without an admixture of which the author of all evil would not have been able to spread the false religion which was being founded. No doubt this opposition to idolatry became one great means of gaining over to the imposture of Mahometanism most of those Iconoclasts who were mentioned in the last chapter. These religionists exaggerated the evil of using images of saints and of our Lord to such an extravagant extent, that they lost sight of more important principles; and finding the new imposture agree with their own principles or prejudices in this particular, they looked on such a basis of agreement as one which they could adopt, without considering the far more important points of fundamental difference. Certain it is that many such Christians were gained over by the impostor. They protested against an image-worship which had little existence beyond their own imagination; they were seduced by the most deadly blasphemy, became the worshippers of an Antichrist, and willingly "received his mark."

The personal supremacy of Mahomet over the whole of Arabia was now established, and he began to carry his arms against Palestine, which was then under the dominion of Heraclius, the Emperor of Constantinople;

but the expedition ending without any engagement between the Christians and the Moslems, Mahomet returned to Medina. His mode of life at this time was of the most sensual description. One of his rules in the Koran for all his followers was that they were to practise polygamy only to the extent of having four wives each. To justify himself in possessing a much larger number, he pretended a fresh revelation, by which he was to be allowed any number that he pleased; and sensual excesses shortened his days, as they have the days of many of his successors.

The death of Mahomet took place on June 8th, 632, when he was at the age of sixty-three. Poison had been given to him some years before by a Jewish slave, but he had not partaken of the poisoned food in sufficient quantity to cause immediately fatal effects, before the woman's act was discovered. The poison remained, however, in his system, and acting upon a frame exhausted by dissipation, carried him off at the time named, after sixteen days of raving fanaticism, leaving no son, and only one daughter, Fatima, behind him. His body was buried in a grave dug under the bed on which he had died, and a mosque erected over the spot has become the scene of as much virtual idolatry in Medina as ever was practised in the Kaaba at Mecca.

Mahomet left to his followers a new religion, and the germ of an Empire. He was succeeded in his rule over

the latter by Abu Bekr, the father of his favourite wife Ayesha, and the first of the four Caliphs by whom the Moslem Empire was founded. Within thirty years from the death of Mahomet, his followers had conquered the whole of Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia, and had overthrown the Empire of the Persians. The second of his four great successors, the Caliph Omar, took Jerusalem in the year 637, and built on the site of the Temple the mosque which has since been called by his name. It was he also who destroyed the great library of Alexandria three years afterwards, declaring that no books were needed besides the Koran; and by that ignorant and savage act deprived the world of some of its greatest literary treasures, including probably many Christian writings, and many primitive MSS. of the Holy Scriptures. Omar was also the first of the Mahometan rulers who assumed the title of "Commander of the Faithful;" and he, in fact, consolidated that which Mahomet himself had founded, and to a great extent completed his work. "During the reign of Omar," says the Mahometan historian, "the Saracens conquered thirty-six thousand cities, towns, and castles, destroyed four thousand Christian, Magian, and Pagan temples, and erected fourteen hundred mosques." As to the latter item, it is certain that many mosques yet exist—as that of St. Sophia at Constantinople—the buildings of which were

originally Christian churches. The early course of this false religion was indeed that of a most sanguinary propagandism; cruelties and acts of tyranny being perpetrated such as no civilized conquerors had ever been guilty of, under the plea of devotion to God and His prophet Mahomet.

The third Caliph, Othman, extended the conquests of Omar, and with them the new religion. Persia was entirely subdued, the north of Africa, and some of the islands in the Mediterranean. He was murdered by his own people in the mosque at Medina, and succeeded by Ali, a first cousin of Mahomet, almost his first convert, and the husband of his daughter Fatima. He, too, after some years of civil war, was slain in a mosque, being the last of the immediate successors of Mahomet. The seat of the empire was then removed to Damascus.

It is not necessary to go into much detail respecting the subsequent history of Mahometan conquest. It will be sufficient just to sketch out in a few words the progress which it made between the time of these its great founders and the period at which modern history begins. Let it be said then that almost the whole of Asia (Asia Minor excepted) was subdued during the time of the four first Caliphs; and that in the reign of the first Caliph of Damascûs, A.D. 675, the empire penetrated as far as Tangier and the Atlantic. A few years later the entire north of Africa was part of the empire, as far as

the Straits of Gibraltar. In 711 Spain, on the north of those Straits, was successfully invaded by the Arab conquerors, who retained possession of that part of Europe until 1492. Under Soliman the greater part of Asia Minor was conquered, that is in A.D. 717 (though Constantinople was not conquered until 1453), and about the same time the northern parts of India were subdued. Their armies had even penetrated into the south of France, and it was not until the defeat of Abdurrahman by Charles Martel in 732 that there seemed any hope of preventing that which Mahomet had directed his followers to accomplish, the subjugation of the whole world to his rule and religion. It brings home the fact of Mahomet's conquest very vividly to our minds to remember that Spain was a Mahometan country for eight hundred years before the Reformation: and that for some centuries the empire founded on the basis of this false religion covered as large a surface of the globe as the Roman Empire had done in the most prosperous days of the Cæsars. When it is remembered that wherever the arms of the invaders penetrated there the religion of the false prophet in whose name they fought and ruled was propagated and enforced, it will be conceived how mighty an enemy Christianity had to contend with in those middle ages of its history. Even now ninety-six millions of Mahometans occupy some of the fairest portions of the Eastern hemisphere. This

religion has almost entire possession of the northern half of Africa, of Turkey in Europe, of Arabia, Persia, the Holy Land, Asia Minor, and some parts of India: and from that false religion very few become converts to Christianity.

Let us now endeavour to sum up the principles of Mahometanism, as it has been exhibited to the world for twelve centuries and a quarter, the deadly rival to the true faith of the Gospel; and in doing so we shall not fail to see how far it contradicted and overthrew those Christian facts and doctrines which had in the six centuries preceding been established on what seemed indisputable evidence.

First of all, then, it must be noted that Mahometanism professes an unbounded veneration for the doctrine of the Unity of God. "Islamism," says the Mahometan doctor, "rests on five foundations; of which the first is the confession of God, that there is no other God beside Him, and that Mahomet is His prophet; the second is the offering up of prayer at stated intervals; the third, the giving of alms; the fourth, fasting during the month Ramadan; and the fifth is the pilgrimage to Mecca, which every person must perform who is able." Now in as far as this confession of one God stands by itself, it may be taken as the truth, just as it was the truth for the Jews to confess, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord." But the Koran entirely repudiates the

doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and says distinctly, "Jesus was a mere mortal, and not the Son of God." His birth by a supernatural conception is denied; His Resurrection and Ascension taken no account of. It avails little, therefore, that the confession of God is made when the Son of God is so shockingly blasphemed; and considering that the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity had been so firmly established when Mahometanism arose, we can only consider this confession of a part of the truth, when it is so awfully coupled with a denial of the other and equally essential part, as one of those distinctive features of Mahometanism to which reference has several times already been made. A measure of truth is preserved that the measure of error may be disguised. The confession of, or belief in, the existence of God as one God is, in fact, a very small step towards the attainment of a religion which will have power for good over the hearts and future destinies of men. It is a truth in which even "the devils also believe and tremble" with awe at the fact, but the saving value of which is lost to them because they fail to believe in that other "only Name given under heaven whereby we must be saved."

This does, in fact, constitute the most serious error of the false religion which we have under consideration. Our Lord is allowed to have been a holy man, a messenger from God, but His place as the object of man's

worship, love, and hope is denied Him. Hence it seems to be an error to call Mahometanism a heresy. Dante views it as such in the "Inferno," where he speaks of the false prophet and his followers as those who

> "——— while they lived did sow,
> Scandal and schism, and therefore thus are rent[6]."

Other writers have also taken this idea, and in a lecture on the subject, Dean Stanley has said that "Mahometanism must be regarded as an eccentric heretical form of Eastern Christianity[7]." But the very essence of Mahometanism is to repudiate Christianity, i.e. the system of religion in which Christ is the centre, and to substitute a system in which He holds a very inferior place, and which would not be one iota changed in practice if its partial acknowledgment of Christ were left out altogether. So in the Creed which was lately quoted, the complement of the truth that there is one God is the assertion that Mahomet is His prophet, and the whole foundation of the system at large is that all personal messengers from God culminated in the person of Mahomet, and all revelations in the Koran. Thus it is a mistake to suppose there is any ground of agreement between Christianity and Mahometanism. When once they are brought face to face they must be as much opposed to each other as Christianity and Paganism.

[6] Inferno, xxviii. 35.

[7] Lect. on Eccl. Hist. p. 308.

It seems almost unnecessary to pursue the question further. That which so dishonours our Blessed Lord cannot have any place in the respect of Christians. It is, however, sometimes alleged that if Mahometan belief is wrong, its practice is right. Prayer is enjoined on all its subjects at five separate periods of the day; but what is the remark of one who is almost its apologist? It is that Mahometan prayer "resembles the worship of machines rather than of reasonable beings;" and this remark becomes more pointed still when we apply it to that which is accounted the highest form of worship among Mahometans—the frantic gyrations and screams of the dervishes, of which Mr. Walter Thornbury and other travellers have given us such vivid descriptions.

Again, what is to be said in favour of a religion which produces so little effect upon the lives of those who practise its rules with even Pharisaical exactness? "Morality and religion," says the writer just referred to, "which stand sufficiently far asunder in the practice of Oriental Christianity, stand further still apart in the practice of a large part of Islam[8]." They stand so far apart, that, as in the life of Mahomet himself, the grossest profligacy and want of moral principle are compatible with an exact attention to devotional rules, and the former are not thought to nullify the latter. Of

[8] Lect. on Eccl. Hist. p. 331.

course a parallel may be drawn from the case of bad living Christians; but then there is this difference, that the vice of bad living Christians is not part of their Christianity, but is in direct opposition to its precepts; whereas much of the vice of Mahometans springs naturally and almost directly from the very precepts of their religion. Persons who have been able to look below the surface of the society which is enslaved by this religious system, have been perfectly horrified at the wickedness they have witnessed; and Miss Martineau, who was admitted to the harems while she was living in Turkey and Egypt, declares her belief that they are a very hell upon earth, abounding in murder and all abominations. And surely all accounts that we have of Eastern life tend towards giving us the impression that the religion of the pretended prophet of Mecca exercises no control whatever over the passions and vices of those who believe in it; but suffers them to follow their own way in this world, and to hope for enjoyment of such sensual pleasures as they have delighted in when they enter upon the next, provided only they outwardly conform to the Pharisaical system under which they live.

We may hope that the light of a natural instinct has not been so utterly clouded out through all the regions over which this Antichristian superstition reigns, but that some who never heard of Christ have found God as far as the natural instinct can find Him. But to expect

that a religion which owes its origin to one who, while he was originating it, was living a life of sensuality, cruelty, and falsehood; a religion in which Christ is ignored as the Saviour of men, and when named, named as inferior to this iniquitous impostor; a religion which has no power to produce holiness of life in those who follow it; a religion which has nothing better to offer for a future life than animal pleasures and gratifications; to expect that such a religion has ever helped men forward to the presence of God, is to expect an impossibility. And if it is impossible for this effete pretence of a religion to render such a service to man, of what value is it to him? If, moreover, that which professes to be a true religion is yet utterly valueless, is it not worse than valueless?

CHAPTER VII.

EARLY ENGLISH CHRISTIANITY.

It would be a safe answer to the question, When did the Church of England come into existence? to say it began about the time St. Luke was writing the Acts of the Apostles. The exact year and manner of its foundation has not indeed been handed down to us. Is it likely it would be? But by "putting this and that together," (and there is a great deal to the purpose, both of the "this" and the "that" in books written shortly after St. Paul's time,) we are enabled to arrive at the almost certain conclusion that it owes its origin chiefly to St. Paul, and that he came over to England for the purpose of founding the Church here soon after the imprisonment which he suffered "for two whole years" at Rome, and which ended in A.D. 63, being the ninth year of the Emperor Nero.

Whether St. Paul found any knowledge of the Gospel already existing in England is a matter for doubt. There is some probability that he did, because a Roman

lady who had been in England with her husband Aulus Plautius when he was viceroy to the Emperor Claudius, was accused, after her return to Rome (which was in A.D. 47), of practising a religious worship unauthorized by the Roman laws; and as Christianity was probably the only religion so unauthorized, it seems likely that this lady, whose name was Pomponia Græcina, had become a Christian during her stay in England. If so, the Church had made a beginning in our country before the conclusion of St. Paul's imprisonment allowed him to come here; and there are some singular indications of a connexion between St. John and the Church of England which will probably be further developed when our liturgical history is more complete, and the archæology of the eastern side of England more thoroughly examined.

The oldest native historian that we have in England is Gildas, who wrote his history about the year 560, a third of a century before the mission of St. Augustine. Gildas hands down the current belief of his day, and the information which he found in books; and he tells his readers that the "Sun of Righteousness" arose in this land about the time that Queen Boadicea was defeated by the Romans, which was in the year 61 or 62, that is about the time when St. Paul was permitted to leave "his own hired house" at Rome for fresh missionary enterprises. He says, too, that the father of Caractacus, who

with the latter had been imprisoned at Rome for some years, was liberated about this time, and brought back to England the knowledge of Christianity which he had acquired there. Is it too much to suppose that he may have brought back with him the Apostle of the Gentiles also? and that he would surely say, "Come over and help us," to one whose readiness to "help" must have been known to every Christian at Rome. Some years later, St. Paul mentions a lady named Claudia, the wife of a Roman named Pudens [1]. This lady is also mentioned, as well as her husband, by the Roman poet Martial, and he speaks of her as being one of our country-women [2]. An inscription in the Catacombs at Rome is supposed by Mr. Maitland to mark the place of Claudia's interment. From an interesting pamphlet on the "Romans in Gloucestershire," printed in 1860, by the Rev. D. Lysons, it seems probable that Pudens was buried near that city, and that a grave stone preserved there to the memory of a Pudens, a Roman officer of the time in which St. Paul lived, is really that of the person mentioned by the Apostle.

These are some of the links in the chain of probabilities by which St. Paul is connected with the origin of the Church of our country. It is also distinctly asserted by Clement of Rome (the "fellow-labourer,"

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 21.

[2] Martial, Book ii. Epist. 54.

whose name, among others, was "written in the book of life[3]") that the Apostle, his friend and companion, carried his missionary work to "the utmost bounds of the west[4]," an expression by which Roman geographical science commonly designated the *ultimos orbis Britannos*[5], little dreaming of the vast continent which lay four thousand miles further west.

Upon the whole, therefore, it must be concluded that though there is not sufficient evidence to prove the matter to a certainty, yet there is enough to make it *almost* certain that St. Paul was the chief person, under God, from whom the Church had its origin in England.

The next we hear of the Church of England from general history is in the writings of the second and third century, when Tertullian[6] and Origen[7], and, somewhat later, Athanasius[8] and Eusebius[9] and Jerome[1], speak of it as a notorious fact that the Christian faith had spread even as far as the islands of Britain, as also does St. Chrysostom in several places.

But our own particular history gives us an account of a king named Lucius (sovereign over some portion of the country under the Romans, somewhat as Herod and

[3] Philipp. iv 3
[4] 1 Ep. Corinth. § 5.
[5] Horace, Book i. Ode 35.
[6] Contra Jud. c. 7.
[7] Hom. in Ezek. iv. in Luc. vi.
Apolog. contra Arian.
[8] Evang. Demonst. l. iii.
[1] 13th Ep. ad Paulin.

others were sovereigns of part of Palestine) who became Christian about the middle of the second century. The venerable Bede and others state that he sent two ambassadors, Elvan and Medwin, to Eleutherius, Bishop of the Imperial city of Rome, requesting instruction on the subject of Christianity; and that Elvan being after some time ordained a Bishop, and Medwin a priest, they were sent back to England by Eleutherius for the purpose of assisting Lucius in converting his people, and establishing an ecclesiastical body in his dominions. It has been thought by some that this was the first time that our country saw the light of the Gospel: but the real fact seems to be that the Church spread with difficulty among our heathen ancestors, and that Eleutherius was applied to, not for the purpose of originating Christianity in England, but of extending and deepening its foundations.

In the year 303 the Church of England was honoured by being made a sufferer under the Diocletian persecution, and the principal of her martyrs at that time was St. Alban. When the persecution commenced, Alban, a man of good rank, but not then Christian, sheltered an aged clergyman who fled to his home for safety, and was converted partly by his instructions and influence, and partly by the example of his holiness. When the officers came to apprehend the old priest, Alban put on his clothes and delivered himself up to them instead, in the

hope of saving his converter by the sacrifice of his own life. His own constancy under torture was the means of converting even the man intended to be his executioner, so that another had to be found. The two then suffered martyrdom together, being beheaded on the spot now covered by the Abbey of St. Alban in Hertfordshire, the town being then known by the Roman name of Verulam.

The martyrdom of St. Alban led to the conversion of many of his countrymen, large numbers of whom suffered for their faith in the course of the next year. But in the year 305, Dioclesian and the cruel Maximian resigned their dominions, causing Galerius and Constantius to be proclaimed emperors. Our own country fell within the dominions of Constantius, who had previously been the Cæsar or viceroy of his predecessor, and held his court at York. His influence had always been used in favour of the Christians, and immediately on his accession all persecution ceased in England and elsewhere. After a year's reign he died, leaving his share of the empire to Constantine his son, then in England, probably born in this country, and of a mother who was an Englishwoman named Helen, the same who was known in later times as St. Helena.

A few years later, the Church of England was represented by three of her bishops at a synod summoned by Constantine the Great for the settlement of the doctrine

of the Church. The three bishops were those of York, London, and Lincoln; and the deputation of three rather than one shows that as early as the year 314, the Church of England must have been divided into a goodly number of dioceses.

The Council of Nicæa, at which the Nicene Creed was first drawn up, was summoned by Constantine in 325, and there is no record of English bishops having been present there. At that of Sardica, however, called by his sons Constantius and Constans in 347, the Church of England was certainly represented by another deputation of her bishops, as they are mentioned by St. Athanasius, whose trial for crimes alleged against him by the Arians was one of the chief objects for which the Council of Sardica was summoned.

In 359 English bishops again appeared as the representatives of their Church and brother bishops, at the Council of Ariminum; and it is noticed that with the exception of three who were very poor, all the French and the British bishops were independent enough to refuse the ordinary allowance made by the Emperor for their expenses.

Towards the close of this century the heresy of Pelagianism took its rise in the Church of England. Pelagius (known at home by the less stately name of Morgan) was a priest of some learning, much of whose later years were spent at Rome until that city was taken

by Alaric and his Goths, when he went to Carthage for a time, and thence to Jerusalem. The substance of his heresy was the denial of original sin. He believed and taught that none but Adam himself received any damage from his fall: that we are born as holy as Adam was before his fall; and that we can live a holy life by the mere power of our own determination to do so, without the aid of supernatural grace from God. The great St. Augustine (not the English missionary, but the still greater Bishop of Hippo, a town in that part of Africa which is now called Algeria), was the chief opponent of this heresy, which seems only to have reached England, though invented by an Englishman, after it had been known for some years in Palestine and Africa. When it did arrive, the orthodox party in the Church of England applied to the Church of France (not to the Church of Rome, by-the-bye) for some persons of learning and discretion who might come across the Channel and assist in combating the heresy. Germanus and Lupus, Bishops of Auxerre and Troyes, were sent over for the purpose: and a conference was held between them and the Pelagians at St. Alban's, in the presence of a great multitude. St. German, by his arguments in the conference, and by the fervid eloquence of his preaching, afterwards brought the greater part of his hearers back to the orthodox side.

It was about this time, in the reign of the Emperor

Honorius, that the Romans altogether abandoned their possession of England, being obliged to concentrate their forces in defence of the more central parts of the Empire. It had been their policy to send all native soldiers abroad, and to garrison the country with Roman legions: and consequently, when they left England themselves, they left it almost defenceless. The Saxons soon took advantage of this state of things, and obtained a rapid supremacy in the island: partly by duplicity, and partly by superior military skill. The intermingling of these heathens with the Christian population appears to have caused a great depression of the Church, and a revival to some extent of the Pelagian heresy. Even in its lowest estate, however, it could send forth St. Patrick (not an Irishman, but one of our own countrymen) to evangelize the people of Scotia, as Ireland was then called. St. Ninian, too, the Apostle of Scotland, was another of the missionary sons of the Church of England, who went northward to convert the Pictish enemies of his country, as St. Patrick went westward to convert her Irish enemies.

But the latter half of this fifth century brought a great change upon the country, and also on the Church, of England. The Saxons began with a comparatively friendly and joint occupation of the island, appearing more like a few colonists than otherwise; but after some years they took the tone of conquerors, increasing the

numbers of their fleets and armies: and in the national quarrel that arose they eventually succeeded in driving the fighting part of the original inhabitants into Cornwall and Wales, and in compelling the rest to become their slaves.

After about a century of patriotic struggles on the part of the British, they were obliged to acknowledge the Saxons for their rulers. During the contest a considerable amalgamation of the conquering army and the conquered nation was taking place; and this was extended over a much larger surface of the country on the establishment of peace, and the consequent additions to the numbers of the foreigners that followed. In the end, a mixed nation was formed in the body of the island, composed of an aristocracy in which the foreign element predominated, and a much larger number of working people, who were necessarily longer in amalgamating with their conquerors. In Wales and Cornwall the fugitive armies combined with the original mountainers to form comparatively independent nations; and in the former we see, even now, the comparatively unadulterated characteristics of our ancestors as they were in the days when the Romans held the country.

The records of the Church among the mixed population are very bare during the greater part of the sixth century, although authentic and comparatively full details have been handed down respecting the sees of

Llandaff and St. David's, and other portions of the English Highlands where no great change had taken place. We may, however, pass over the justly venerated names of St. David, St. Asaph, Dubricius, St. Columba, St. Kentigern, St. Petrock, and come shortly to the close of the century, which saw a revival in the Church of England through the conversion of many of the conquering Saxons to the faith.

The power of Saxon heathenism had so predominated, that the few remaining clergy seem to have been driven from their churches, and the Bishops of London and York (Theonas and Thadiocus by name) retreated, hopeless of maintaining their position, into that part of the country which we now call Wales. Their retirement took place in A.D. 587, and it seems to have been a consequence of their position as part of a very depressed and enslaved nation, that they were able to do little towards the conversion of those who had taken possession of the land.

§. *The First Papal Aggression.*

Modern Roman Catholics are in the habit of referring the first conversion of England to Christianity to the end of the sixth century, when some missionaries came into England from Rome under the leadership of the great St. Augustine of Canterbury; and there are some English Churchmen who take such a very un-national

view of their own early history, that they come to nearly the same conclusion. Historians of this class do not deny altogether the presence of Christianity in England before the mission of Augustine, for of course it is far too certain to be denied, but they consider that early English Christianity was of a vague and fugitive character, and did not extend over more than a few patches of the island. No doubt such historians would criticize the previous pages very severely; but they have been penned under the conviction that the view which is sketched out is the true aspect of the facts handed down to us about our early Church; and instead, therefore, of looking upon the work of St. Augustine and his companions as a conversion, or even re-conversion of England, we may look upon it as the first "Papal aggression" on our country and our Church.

It was, however, with the very best intentions that these good and holy missionaries set out on their work. An interest had somehow arisen in Rome as to the spiritual condition of these distant lands. The ordinary story as to the manner in which this interest arose is a very beautiful one, and will bear being told over again, though it is familiar to almost every one. St. Gregory, who afterwards became Bishop of Rome, was one day passing through the slave-market,—either while as a layman he was prefect (or Lord Mayor) of Rome, or else soon after he had resigned that office, and became a

deacon in the Church, and a brother in the monastery of St. Andrew there,—when his attention was attracted by the beauty of several auburn-haired youths who were exposed for sale among the slaves. Turning to the person in charge of them, he asked where they came from, and was told, from Britain; and inquiring further if they were Christians, was told by the merchant that they were still entangled in Pagan errors. After an exclamation of regret, Gregory asked again what was the name of the nation to which these youths belonged, and was told they were called Angles. He caught at the word, and exclaimed, "Angles? Angels, rather, for angel-like they are. But to what province do they belong?" "Deira[2]," was the reply. "Ay, and from God's ire they shall be rescued, and brought over to the grace of Christ. And what is their king's name?" "It is Ælla." "Fitly so called, for Alleluia must be chanted in his dominions[3]."

Whether this is history or a pleasing invention of some witty admirer of St. Gregory, cannot be certainly said. The account rather implies that the good monk was so little acquainted with a country which was pretty well known to the Romans, as to be unaware

[2] The southern portion of what we now call the "north country"—Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland, with part of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

[3] The word was written in the short form *Alla* in the old service books.

that Christianity had been long known there. But, however that may be, Gregory besought the Bishop of Rome to allow him to lead a missionary company to England, and had already set out on his journey, when the great popularity which he had gained at Rome caused the people to demand and enforce his return; and not very long after he became Bishop of Rome. Whatever the reasons for his wishing to undertake this missionary enterprise, those reasons still influenced him; and in the year 596, Augustine, Prior of St. Andrew's Monastery at Rome, was sent forth by him to Britain, with several companions, much as Archdeacon Mackenzie was a few years since sent forth from Canterbury to Central Africa; the leader of the mission being, in each case, intended for the future Bishop.

After some troubles by the way, which necessitated a return to Rome for further advice and authority, St. Augustine and his company, amounting now to forty in number, set foot on English ground some time in the spring of the year 597. It was on the Isle of Thanet that they first landed; and before proceeding further, they sent messengers to the King of Kent (afterwards King of nearly all England) to acquaint him with their arrival. King Ethelbert's Queen, named Bertha, was a Christian, though Ethelbert was not: and on her marriage she had made it a condition that she should be allowed to have a private chapel, and to

bring over from France her chaplain, whose name was Luidhard. The King had probably some knowledge, therefore, of Christianity, though he was yet unbaptized, and was ready to receive the missionaries with courteous hospitality at Canterbury, which was his capital city. Here they settled down, and it was not long before Ethelbert embraced the faith, and was baptized by St. Augustine. The reason why the king had not been previously brought to the faith by his wife's French chaplain is not known; but some reasons have already been given why it was unlikely that the native clergy would have much influence over the conquerors of the land.

St. Augustine does not seem to have met with any of the native clergy at Canterbury. There had not been a Bishop or Archbishop of that city as yet; and perhaps the few clergy who had formerly been there had died, without being replaced by others. Whether the missionaries still supposed England to be a heathen land at this time cannot be told, but they evidently acted as if they did; for without endeavouring to hold any communication with the native Bishops, Augustine returned to France to receive consecration to the see of Canterbury at the hands of the Archbishop of Arles and other French prelates; and returned within six or seven months of his first arrival in the country, as the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

At this time there were two English Archbishops living, Theonas, Archbishop of *London*, and Thadiocus, Archbishop of York. If Augustine knew of them, he probably caused himself to be consecrated to a *new* see at Canterbury, for a similar reason to that which has led Dr. Wiseman and Dr. Manning to call themselves Archbishops of *Westminster*, that there might be no confusion of titles or claims through two Bishops professing to hold the same see. But it is possible that St. Augustine was not so well informed as Dr. Wiseman and Dr. Manning, for the Archbishop of London had been driven from his see about ten years before; and about the same time Thadiocus had been obliged to leave York. If he afterwards became better acquainted with the actual condition of the English Church, as it was before his arrival, the new Archbishop probably respected its arrangements; for no new Bishop was appointed to the see of London until the year 604, nor to York until 625. As Theonas had been Archbishop of London since 553, he must have been very old at the time of St. Augustine's arrival, and probably it was because of his death, that Mellitus (one of a new company of missionaries from Rome) was made Bishop of London in 604. The same reason may have delayed the consecration of Paulinus, his companion, to the see of York until 625.

However little knowledge St. Augustine possessed of

English Christianity when he first set foot in England, it was not long before he came to know that there was a flourishing Church in the western part of the island, under an Archbishop of Caerleon and other Bishops. With these he sought an interview, which took place somewhere in Gloucestershire or Worcestershire, perhaps at Aust on the Severn, in the former county. The new Archbishop of Canterbury had received from the Bishop of Rome—who had no manner of right to give it—authority over all other English Bishops, and he now claimed to exercise this supremacy towards the Bishops who came from Wales to meet him. They refused to acknowledge it, and asserted at once that while they looked with respect on the Bishop of Rome as an elder brother, they could never admit that he had any right to assume such powers over them as Augustine represented to have been assumed. Angry differences arose on this and other points, in which Augustine endeavoured to make them yield to the authority of Rome, and a bitterness sprung up between the native Bishops and those who came from a foreign land, which was not eradicated for centuries. It is very unnecessary to suppose that so good a man as St. Augustine evidently was, gave way to the ambition which he was very naturally charged with. He probably had strong feelings as to the purity of the doctrine and liturgical usages of the Church from which he had sprung, and at the same

time exaggerated ideas as to the errors of the native Church; and thus he was led into a stiff line of conduct, which alienated from him those with whom he ought to have been united. He had founded a church in Kent in as strict accordance as circumstances would admit of with that Roman pattern which he loved and respected, and was now anxious that the native church, which was 500 years older, should be altered in many particulars in which the lawful authorities of the ancient Church saw no need of change. It seems very strange that St. Augustine should have made so little attempt at conciliation under these circumstances: and no wonder that his conduct has often been thought to foreshadow, even at that early period, the arrogancy and extravagant pretensions which afterwards characterized the Popes in dealing with England. Quaint Bishop Godwin writes rather severely of this conduct: "We deny not but he was sent to preach Christ and his religion: but it is manifest he preached also himself, like a curst cow throwing down with his heele much of the good milke that before he had given."

It will be seen from the account here given, however, that the first Papal aggression was infinitely more respectable than some of its successors: and there is no wish to depreciate a work which had so much real good in it. It was, in fact, the means chosen out by God in His Providence, for effecting that conversion of the

Saxon race, which those whom they had reduced to so low a temporal condition could never have accomplished. It was not St. Augustine himself who did accomplish this work, for many large districts of England remained in the same condition in which he found them until after his death, which happened in the year 604. But by his mission a quantity of youthful vigour was brought to English Christianity, and this gradually combined with the ancient stability of constitution which the old Church of the country possessed to establish a great and good ecclesiastical system, which has never since ceased to flourish both in externals and also in spiritual matters. The English Church of later centuries was the fair and strong representative of a succession which could trace up its ancestry to the Apostles, on one hand through a native line, and on the other through its foreign alliance as brought about by St. Augustine: and perhaps that twofold origin is still developing its results in the daily increasing influence of our Church among nations all over the world.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHURCH OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

Not very long ago there was a general idea that Christianity suffered an almost total eclipse after the dissolution of the Roman Empire, and that it only again shed its full light upon the world when the dawn of the Reformation had extended into the full daylight of Protestantism. Much the same idea was current in respect to literature and the arts; the books, painting, poetry, and music of the "Dark" Ages having been considered little better than barbarous, wanting alike in beauty, learning, taste, and skill.

The study of history and the application of antiquarian research to Christian, mediæval, and English antiquities, has very much modified our opinions on this subject. It is found that Art was in full vigour during those times which were formerly thought to have been so barbarous, and we have often good reason to be thankful that learning was far from being extinct. In the architecture of the middle ages we find productions more wonderful

by far, for skill, than in that of classical days; and all who have studied them acknowledge them to be more beautiful. In the book-paintings we have works of art which we have tried hard, but in vain, hitherto, to rival. In the gold and silversmiths' work, in carving, and other similar artistic handicraft productions, we have found our best models for modern art of a similar kind. In music, we are beginning to see that the period in question was by no means to be despised. And lastly, in literature we are coming to a frank acknowledgment that the Middle Ages could produce both works of imagination and works of deep thought, which are not surpassed by analogous productions of more recent times, and our own day.

It is pleasing to reflect that we have been able also to arrive at the happy conclusion that religion was not so dark as it once seemed to us to be in the Dark Ages, and that there has never been a time since the beginning of Christianity when God left Himself without abundant witness, or left men without the true means of salvation. And when in this chapter it will be our task to bring together some of the historical facts and evidences which illustrate this happy conclusion, it may well be considered that, from a Christian point of view, we are undertaking one of the most pleasant portions of this volume.

In dealing with the History of Christianity during the

mediæval period, we may confine ourselves almost entirely to our own country; partly because we cannot extend this chapter so far as a general account of the world's Christianity for eight or ten centuries would require us to do: and partly because our own country must necessarily furnish us with particulars of greater interest than any other. It will be necessary, however, to make some observations on the state of the Christian world after the dissolution of the Roman Empire, and especially on the rise and progress of the Papal system, and these will lead us for a short time, into a larger field of history.

The last link which connected the Western world with the old traditions of the empire, was broken by the refusal of the Romans to pay tribute to the Emperors of the East during the Iconoclast controversy[1]. For a time indeed Charlemagne (A.D. 774) revived the title of Emperor, but he assumed no power over Rome and the country surrounding it; for when his father Pepin had conquered Lombardy, the "States of the Church" had been founded by him (A.D. 752), and handed over as a gift to the Bishop of Rome, who thenceforward became an independent sovereign as well as Bishop[2].

Although Charlemagne succeeded in consolidating an

[1] See page 148.

[2] It was once believed by Romanists that these States were made over to the Bishops of Rome by a donation of Constantine the Great; but they now acknowledge this "donation" to be a fable of the eighth century instead of a fact of the fourth.

empire, yet it seems to have been the will of Providence that a system of separate nationalities should entirely supersede the system of universal empire under the reign of Christianity. If any human rulers could have revived the latter, and revived it on good, sound, Christian principles, those rulers were Justinian in the sixth century, and Charlemagne in the eighth; but in neither age were the great qualities of these Emperors sufficient to re-establish that which it was not the will of Providence to permit to be re-established.

The nations of central Europe were Christianized when in a comparatively uncivilized condition. The Goths, Visigoths, and Huns, who invaded Italy in the fifth century, were Arian or Semi-Arian in their religious belief, if indeed there was, before that invasion, much Christianity at all among them. The maritime nations, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, were at that time probably heathens altogether. France and Spain were completely Christianized and orthodox (though Spain was soon subdued by the Mahometan Moors); while the British Isles were a divided territory, in which Christianity had to contend with Paganism in various parts of the land until a comparatively late period[3].

[3] It is singular to find that there are still traces of Paganism in some of the lonely districts of Northern Scotland. The superstitions which abound there are almost universally of a heathen character, similar in character to those of Scandinavia and Iceland.

§. *The Papal Authority.*

As the ancient unity of the Church was breaking up through political causes, a new kind of unity originated in the Papacy; something of an ecclesiastical empire being gradually established on the ruins of the old secular one, and the Bishops of Rome, nominally temporal rulers of a small Italian state, were invested with an authority scarcely less, at times, than that swayed by their mighty predecessors of the Imperial city.

In considering the rise and progress of Papal power it is well to be reasonable and historical. It would not be reasonable to suppose that a general *furor* for spiritual bondage seized upon the nations of the world, so that they all bowed down their necks to the yoke of the Popes; it would not be historical to think that the Popes conquered the world as their great forerunners had done by force of arms, or that they subjugated simple and unwilling intellects by cunning and diplomacy. If we do not repudiate the teaching of history we shall look beyond the commonplaces of superficial talkers about things and men of bygone days; and looking, we shall find that while the growth of the Papal power over the Christian world is one of the most marvellous of the many phenomena of history, it is to be accounted for on other grounds than those of force or cunning. Let us try and set down impartially some of the causes of that growth, as well as its progress.

It may be said, at the outset, that orthodox Christianity has a tendency to centralize; and that this tendency began to show itself at a very early period. From the very principle itself of Episcopal government, this must almost necessarily have been the case; for as each congregation of Christians centralized around their individual pastor, so the pastors of a diocese gathered around their Bishop. And on a very similar principle Bishops selected some one of their own order to exercise metropolitical authority over them, to some of whose sees were added great Patriarchates or agglomerations of dioceses as is the case with that of Canterbury at the present day; and with the colonial dioceses formed within the last twenty years. Of these great metropolitical Patriarchates there were several recognized (if not at the time of the Council of Nicæa, in A.D. 325, certainly very soon afterwards), viz., Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, and Cæsarea; of which Rome and Constantinople were undoubtedly considered the chief. The authority of Patriarchs was not indeed equal to that of Popes, but their office was manifestly one which might develope into that of the latter under circumstances favourable to its extension. And that, of all others, the Patriarchate of Rome should assume a foremost place is not to be marvelled at, when the position of that wondrous city among the cities of the world, is taken fairly into account.

At a very early period the see of Rome was looked up to with respect by the Christian world. Rome was the most influential city of the Empire, and the central resort of all civilized nations. The see was venerable from its association with St. Peter, the Apostle of the Circumcision, and St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, who divided as it were the whole world between them; and who both ministered and suffered in the streets of that great city[4]. In the days of persecution it had often been the very focus of martyrdom, and a majority of its Bishops for the first three centuries had in this manner passed away from their work, often with circumstances of extreme suffering. There was also a fact well known to Christians in all parts of the world, and being known, likely to win great respect for the Church of Rome, namely, that it and its Bishops had always remained stedfast to the old Apostolic faith when heresy was spreading fast in the principal cities of the Eastern world. When cities such as Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, were overrun with heresy, and their Bishops had given in to heretical principles, Rome and her Bishops escaped infection almost entirely, there being but one Bishop of Rome in those days, Liberius, who was suspected of favouring Arianism. Hence a high opinion arose of the

[4] The idea that St. Peter was never at Rome is a crotchet unsupported by any evidence whatever worthy of the name. All historical testimony on the subject indicates that he was, and that he died there.

stedfastness of the Church of Rome in the two great dangers to which Christians were at that time subject—persecution from the heathen, and misbelief among themselves; and this confidence in her sometimes led other Churches to consult the Bishop and Clergy of Rome when they were in difficulties, and required advice or support.

All these circumstances combined to give to the Church of the city of Rome a kind of natural precedence among the independent members of the Church Catholic. Other cities occasionally attained such a precedence for a short time through temporary circumstances; as Carthage through the great authority of the great Cyprian, and Constantinople in the days of Chrysostom. But the *prestige* of Rome did not depend on the greatness of any individual occupant of its see. It was the result of various circumstances added together and accumulating through several centuries. Nor must it be forgotten that some such superior authority must have been much desired from the time when the Church had leaned on the Apostles themselves and on those who had conversed with them, as we know was the case. Had Jerusalem remained what it was in the Apostles' days, the Christian world would probably have continued to "go up to Jerusalem" in case of any difficulties. But, except in the immediate age of the Apostles, Jerusalem never seems to have had any claim to special weight. It was natural, therefore, that in the new dispensation,

by which the Church and the world were to be co-extensive, the premier city of the one should become, in a greater or less degree, the chief centre of the other also.

Nor can we see any reason why this should not have been in the existing circumstances of the Roman Empire. Our own Empire is as extensive as that was; and as a matter of common sense, apart from the reverence due to the ancient seat of our chief Archbishopric, it would be a very convenient thing if the ecclesiastical focus of the great *de facto* Anglican Patriarchate were London rather than Canterbury; for, in practice, all the business of the Patriarchate (to call it so for a moment), its Synods, its Courts of Appeal, &c., is really transacted in the great city which forms no part of the see of Canterbury, while next to nothing is done in the small city which forms its nominal centre. Let us add also, that when the Roman Empire became Christian it was exceedingly convenient to the civil power to have a central Bishop, who could be treated—as our Archbishops of Canterbury are—as a sort of Minister of Religion for state purposes, in addition to the functions belonging to him independently of the State. Thus, after Christianity became established, Rome was definitely recognized by the Imperial government (which was the government of the civilized world) as the premier see of all Bishoprics within the bounds of the empire. And even when the seat of empire was removed to Constantinople, the latter

city was considered to rank not before, but next after, Rome in ecclesiastical honour, dignity, and position.

In the middle of the fifth century this accidental and occasional supremacy began to assume a more authoritative character. Great rivalry had sprung up between the sees of old and new Rome, and Leo (A.D. 459) applied to the Emperor Valentinian III. for a recognition as Head of the whole Western Church in right of his position as successor of St. Peter. This was conceded, but the concession was somewhat limited not long afterwards, by assigning a similar position to the see of Constantinople, which was now quite equal to that of Rome, on the ground that it had become the Imperial city and residence. This was alleged by the Council of Chalcedon to be the reason why Rome had always held the primacy; which shows that divine right of supremacy was not yet conceded to the Bishops of Rome by other Bishops.

The power of the Roman Bishop oscillated a good deal during the succeeding century; such Emperors as Justinian restraining it. And it so happened that the title of Universal Bishop was first assumed not by Rome, but Constantinople. This was about A.D. 590, when a Bishop of Constantinople, known as John the Faster, assumed the title of Universal Bishop. Gregory the Great was Bishop of Rome at the time, and he remonstrated with the proud ascetic, telling him (among other sharp truths

which cut both ways) that whoever took such a title to himself was the precursor of Antichrist.

By a singular, but quite accidental coincidence, it was this very Bishop of Rome—deservedly called Great—who (as was shown in the last chapter) laid the foundations of Papal authority in England, and that about the very time that he was remonstrating with the Bishop of Constantinople for claiming universal authority or the pretence of it, to which no individual Bishop could possibly have a rightful claim. There is no reason to think that Gregory was insincere in resisting such an assumption, and the steps that he took with respect to England were taken from the very best motives, and not from any desire of doing that himself which he condemned in another. Yet very soon afterwards the title was assumed by the Roman Bishops, and has been used by them ever since.

But what tended most of all, perhaps, to give the Roman see power was the practice which had become common with other Churches, of appealing to the Bishop and Church of Rome in any case of doubt respecting doctrine or discipline which required or seemed to require some other authority than its own to decide. In these appeals, the Roman Bishops were not, however, looked upon as superiors and judges, but as advisers; and they were made, not in recognition of Roman supremacy, but of Roman orthodoxy, learning, judgment, piety, and

independence. Subsequently, too, a court of appeal from the civil power became necessary, and was considered so by the civil power itself; and when Rome became that court of appeal another advantage accrued to it which was, not slowly, laid hold of.

Thus gradually the power of the Papal supremacy over Western Christendom began to be developed, and it was taking a definite and authoritative form at that very period when the Middle Ages may be said to have been commencing—the eighth century; though its highest claims were not made or enforced until some centuries later.

It is not enough however to trace out the historical course of an abstraction under the name of Papal power. Let us, therefore, consider further what was the real character of that which we understand by Papal power and Papal supremacy.

Before the eleventh century, there were no definite principles or laws laid down by which the extent of the Pope's authority could be exactly traced. The popes were, as I have already shown, temporal sovereigns of a portion of Italy, and their authority over the dominions held by them was exactly similar to that of other sovereigns. They also claimed to exercise, and did exercise, a spiritual authority over all parts of the Western world: which authority extended to the making and executing of ecclesiastical laws, and to the judging, without further appeal, in ecclesiastical causes. But this authority,

though it was vigorously exercised over the clergy and laity of all ranks when occasion required, was only a supremacy with reference to the religious affairs of the world. At all times indeed, there were found fearless Bishops of Rome, who would use the weapon of excommunication against the highest offenders. As St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan, forbad the Emperor Theodosius the Great to enter the Church until he had shown penitence for his cruelty towards the Thessalonians in the year 388; as the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Nicolas Mysticus excommunicated the Emperor Leo the Wise, about the year 910, for his fourth marriage; and as St. Dunstan in the same century subjected King Edgar to a seven years' penance for a gross act of immorality; so Gregory II. and Gregory III. had not hesitated to excommunicate the Emperor Leo the Isaurian for his fanatic breach of Christian Unity, in 730: and other Bishops of Rome exhibited the same unflinching boldness in dealing with sinners, whether they were kings or beggars. But it is clear that this was merely assuming in a supreme degree, and over Christians every where, and in every station, the spiritual authority of discipline which every Bishop exercised within the limits of his own diocese. It was the authority of an universal Bishop, but not of an universal Sovereign; and such an authority, whether necessary or not in the Christian world, would always have commanded respect

at least, when it was exercised with integrity and impartiality.

But in the eleventh century this claim of supremacy over kings and peoples in their religious affairs, developed into a claim of supremacy in affairs which bore indirectly only, and sometimes hardly at all, on the spiritual welfare of the world. Two great expeditions were undertaken in this century, the one that of William the Conqueror against England, and the other that of Robert Guiscard against the Saracens who held the island of Sicily. In both cases the sanction of the Pope was asked and given; in the expedition against the usurping Saracen enemies of Christianity, not unreasonably, but in that against Christian England most unreasonably. Such a precedent on the part of sovereigns themselves was not likely to lose force in the hands of a great and ambitious Pope like Gregory VII., the famous Hildebrand. He accordingly asserted a feudal authority over Spain and Hungary, the one as being an actual part of the Papal dominions, the other as having been given to the see of Rome by the canonized Stephen, the first Christian King of Hungary, in A.D. 1000. Then, when long and bitter disputes occurred between himself and Henry IV., Emperor of Germany, he not only excommunicated the latter, but issued a decree which professed to deprive the Emperor of his temporal sovereignty, a step far beyond any which his predecessors had taken. Whether the Pope was

right or wrong in issuing a sentence of excommunication in the case, there can be no doubt as to the unjustifiable assumption of authority which that document exhibits: "I forbid to King Henry, son of Henry the Emperor, who, through an unexampled pride, has rebelled against this Holy Church, the government of the whole realm of Germany and Italy. I absolve all Christians from the oaths which they have taken, or may take to him; and I decree that no one shall obey him as King," &c., &c., &c.

Such an extravagant distortion of episcopal authority is disclaimed by some Roman writers; but it has never been disclaimed by the Popes. On the contrary, our own country has been the subject of it, in the case of King John in the Middle Ages, and of Queen Elizabeth in later times. Nor is it disclaimed by all Roman writers; for two great authorities on the subject of the supremacy, Bellarmine and St. Thomas Aquinas, declare that the Pope possesses, by divine right, the most ample authority over the whole world, both in civil and in ecclesiastical matters [5]; his authority is the very apex of civil and ecclesiastical power [6]; and so completely does this authority override all other, that if any king is excommunicated on account of apostasy (which means in this case, separation from the Roman see), his subjects are, by the very fact of the excommunication,

[5] Bellarm. de Potestate summi Pontificis in Rebus Temporalibus, §. i.
[6] St. Thom. Aquin. Secund. Secund. qu. xliii. art. 8

liberated from his rule, and from their oath of fidelity to him [7]. Moreover, this universal authority is of such a nature, that by virtue of his position, *jure divino*, "*ut supremum totius mundi regem*," he may exercise the privilege of an actual sovereign over all the world, in levying taxes upon all Christian people every where; and may even destroy fortresses and cities, belonging to less universal sovereigns, if he thinks such destruction conducive to the interests of the Church [8]. This was just the authority claimed by Pius V., when he excommunicated Queen Elizabeth in 1570, for he declared himself to be "Prince over all nations, and all kingdoms, having the right to pluck up, destroy, dissipate, ruin, plant, and build;" and possessing such a supremacy, he uses it to deprive the Queen of "her pretended right to her dominion, and to absolve all her subjects from their oath-of allegiance." These are sounding words enough, and they would have been backed up by deeds, if two or three stout impediments had not been thrown in the way of their accomplishment by the Queen and by the English nation. As far, however, as principles go, they represent very exactly the *Dictates* of Hildebrand himself, a much more powerful Pope than Pius V., the sum of those Dictates being as follows: "The Roman Pontiff can alone claim to be called universal, alone

[7] St. Thom. Aquin. Sec. qu. xii. 2.

[8] Ibid. de Regim. Princip. cx. and cxix. endorsed by Bellarmine.

depose and restore Bishops, alone use the Imperial insignia, and alone have his feet kissed by all princes. He can depose emperors; can be judged by none; and his sentence can only be cancelled by his own act. He can absolve subjects from their allegiance to the wicked. No council can be called general without his command. No one can be reputed a Catholic who dissents from the Roman Church. The Roman Church neither has erred, nor ever will err."

Such, then, were the extravagant claims to supreme authority over the Christian world which were held in theory, and put in practice when opportunity offered during the Middle Ages. In the present day the Pope has seemed to shrink even from carrying the excommunication of monarchs beyond a threat, and would probably never claim a right to depose them. But change of practice does not always involve change of principle, and in the studied absence of any repudiation of extreme claims, the world will always consider that it is want of power to support such claims which has alone caused them to be suspended.

So far as any practice which is wrong in principle can be defended on the ground of expediency, it may be admitted that the high claims of the Papacy during the Middle Ages were not without a bright sight as to their results. There was much wild and lawless tyranny among the rulers of Europe, during those centuries when

the fabric of a more perfect civilization was consolidating; and the supreme power of the Pope was not unfrequently exercised with good effect in checking this lawlessness, and in warning tyrannical sovereigns that they were not utterly above all accountableness. When there was no public law, the occasional appeal to the Pope was even a step towards freedom. If it was ever felt as a yoke, the yoke was very submissively borne, even by those who were powerful enough to cast it off; and this fact seems some evidence that it was felt to be for the common good. Perhaps an apology may be offered even for the Hildebrandine supremacy in the fact that it reconciled discords, overruled tyrannies, drew order out of confusion, and made lawlessness submit to law. It lost all its good points however, when maintained by bad men; and was uprooted by the ambition and secularity which superseded a desire for the good of Universal Christendom. There is a charm about the theory of a centre of Unity and an Universal Bishop; but the theory is too high ever to be carried out with integrity and righteousness by mortal man. Yet even the approach that was made towards it was not without its uses, as has been shown, in the unsettled times which we call the Middle Ages; and many of the Popes were very pious men, who tried to use for God's honour and the good of the Church the enormous authority with which they were, by accident and usurpation, invested.

§. *The Papal Authority in England.*

It is necessary now to say a few words on the influence which was attained over our own Church by the Popes; and to show in as condensed a manner as possible, what was the extent, and what was the character of that influence.

Much has been written by the Romanists of modern days, and by our own side, too, on the subject of Papal influences and authority in the Anglo-Saxon Church. The present writer leans most decidedly to the opinion that there was very little of that actual interference of Rome in the affairs of England before the eleventh century, which became so conspicuous afterwards; but he must ask his readers to take this opinion on trust, as the arguments which could be adduced in support of it would occupy too much space, and would be of too uninteresting a character for general readers.

After the Norman invasion the case became very different. It is indeed difficult for us to understand how without conquest any foreign Prince could ever have attained to the enormous political, or rather constitutional, influence over the country, which the Pope of Rome possessed over England between the days of the Normans and the sixteenth century. It is mere nonsense to speak of that influence as wholly or chiefly religious. It was just such an influence as belongs in

our own days to the Prime Minister for the time being; and the religious part of it did not extend very much beyond the religious influence of Lord Palmerston's famous patronage in the appointment to offices in the Church, and such supremacy as a Prime Minister can always exercise over its movements. It is not, of course, denied that all the machinery of this political power of a foreign Prince was hidden under the veil of a religious form of expression: or that it was exercised in a great degree through the Clergy; but what is meant is, that the object of bulls, rescripts, and interdicts, was to retain around the Kings and people of England that political chain which was first fettered on in the days of William the Conqueror, and was immensely strengthened by the unconstitutional act of his great-grandson, John, when he did homage to the Pope for his kingdom, and thereby set the example of receiving it as a donation from a foreign Prince's hands.

It has been said that it was wonderful how any foreign power could be so long wielded over England without conquest, but it must be remembered that the Pope of Rome adopted in some degree those very measures by which his predecessors, the Emperors of Rome, had so long retained their authority over countries which would otherwise have struggled for independence. During the reign of the Normans and the early Plantagenets, these foreign kings had so little of the heart of Englishmen,

that they were glad to use the assistance of other foreign powers as far as they could in retaining their places. Accordingly, William the First, as well as his successors, were anxious that Italians and Frenchmen should be appointed to all the English sees; the Conqueror making a special request to the Pope that he would thus assist him in keeping his hold upon the country. And so it happened that for many long years after the Conquest foreigners took possession of all high places in the Church, and were the very obedient servants—in most cases—of the Pope, since all their natural feelings went to recognize him as their sovereign. Such a system was therefore something like that by which India used to be kept in subjection—a native army, officered by foreigners: the Italian dignitaries of the ecclesiastical army of England being represented by the English officers—the other priests of the Church by the body of native soldiers.

This way of influencing the country, and of drawing its revenues to a foreign crown lasted for about two centuries, when it was so firmly resisted by the Edwards that it could be pursued no longer. Another plan was therefore adopted, that of the mendicant orders, or Friars, who came into being in England about the thirteenth century. It must be remembered that Friars were very seldom clergymen. Neither fish nor fowl, they were a set of men who went about as preachers—

being for the most part foreigners—and whose chief duty was to beg for the Pope. The books of the day complain most bitterly of the influence which they gained by this local preaching and begging, and of the way in which they drew the people from their allegiance to Church and State. They formed, in fact, a sort of secret police, used by the Pope to counteract the influence of the native clergy, and for a time they did their work very effectually. It is of the Friars that we read most of those tales about profligacy and wickedness of all sorts in the ages preceding the Reformation. They mixed freely among the lowest classes that they might the more influence them; and then, as now, the tavern was a place where numbers of those classes were always to be found. They were, in fact, doing the very same kind of work, for a different object, which is often done by political agitators in our own day: and though like these they did for a time gain over the people, yet their principles were not the natural principles of a loyal people, and so in the end they fell to the ground.

So much is said about these Friars, because they and their iniquities—quite distinct, let it be remembered, from the real English Clergy—formed one of the most Roman characteristics of Romanized England. Other causes led on the monarchs and nobles to take part in freeing England from the foreign yoke; but the people were provoked to take part in that resistance chiefly

through the great abuses and extortions which had been exercised by the Pope's militia of local preachers—the begging friars.

And now the question offers itself, when the Friars and the Pope had done their worst, what did the result amount to as regards the Romanizing of the Church of England?

It is so common for people to make wide and sweeping assertions about the condition of religion in our country before the time of the Reformation, that one would sometimes be doing a great service to society by asking those who talk thus what their authority is for what they say. In general, that authority can be traced out as some very shallow but dogmatic history, which in the last century or the beginning of the present, laid hold of the popular mind, because no other history existed, and from which popular ideas about those distant times are taken. A more thorough investigation of the times tends, however, to show us that the evils of Popery in England were not those which are commonly attributed to it: that there was much holiness of life among us, notwithstanding those evils; and that we are to be thankful for the Reformation on somewhat different grounds to those for which thankfulness is professed by those who know least about it.

The principal evils consequent upon the Romanizing of our Church may be summed up under three prin-

cipal heads, and with these the present section may be concluded.

1. The great fundamental evil was that already pointed at, the denationalizing of the Clergy, and drawing them and their interests into connexion with the Pope, a foreign prelate and a foreign sovereign, who claimed an authority which was altogether inconsistent with our freedom as a Church and a nation.

2. In consequence of this, large sums of money were drawn out of the country for the use of the Pope, and by him applied to purposes which were often contrary to the interests of England, and very rarely indeed of any advantage to it, or its Church.

3. Our connexion with Rome originated many abuses in the practices and doctrine of our Church, which would not, perhaps, have been found in her at all if there had been no such connexion. These abuses are pointed out in some of our XXXIX Articles, which are many of them distinct protests against the Romanizing of our Church. It is not necessary for us to allude to them at length; but their character is indicated by naming such as the over-defined doctrine respecting the Blessed Sacrament, from which our Church recoiled at the Reformation; and that peculiar doctrine of the intermediate state which we know under the name of Purgatory—two dogmas which lay at the root of most of the doctrinal errors of those times.

That it was a great blessing for our Church to be delivered from the Papal authority and Papal abuses of those times, no one can doubt who reads history aright. The deliverance was one of those mighty acts of an unseen and merciful Providence in which men were moved they knew not how, and not unfrequently against their will. Nor will any one who reads history aright doubt that the same Providence has willed that no renewed connexion of the English Church with the see of Rome, which should in the least degree assimilate to the old, can ever take place. She was Romanized for five centuries, but can never be Romanized again. If the two great systems of the Church of England and the Church of Rome are to be reunited in friendly bonds, it must be on a more catholic basis.

§. *The Means of Grace in the Christianity of the Middle Ages.*

Having considered the great external religious characteristic of the Middle Ages, the Papal power, something must now be said respecting the means which Christians possessed in those days for attaining to the knowledge of saving Truth, and for using the grace of God which that knowledge leads earnest hearts to seek.

It need hardly be observed that churches were as abundant in that period as they are now. They were,

in reality, much more abundant, there being more—at least in England—than now exist, and the population for which they were provided being very much smaller. Mr. Hallam reckons that the number of people in England in 1380 amounted to 2,300,000, which is seven or eight hundred thousand below the present population of London. Of course there were then large tracts of forest and moorland which were entirely uninhabited; but even taking that fact into consideration, the inhabited portions of the country must have been very thinly peopled, in comparison with these days when the population of England amounts to nine times that number. Now, if we take any country district within a circle of ten or twelve miles, and look over the churches, we shall find that nine out of ten—in many districts, nineteen out of twenty — were built in the Middle Ages, and some at a very distant period of them. In the county of Berkshire, for instance, it is said that the first church which has been built in its whole extent since the Reformation, was built under the superintendence of the still living vicar of Sheen, about one hundred and eighty remaining of those churches which had been previously erected, although those connected with monastic institutions, and some others, had ceased to exist. Supposing that the population has only increased threefold instead of ninefold, since the days when these two hundred or so of churches were built, it is

plain that the people of Berkshire in those bygone times were at least as well provided with places of worship as their descendants are. And there can be no doubt that historical and antiquarian investigations in any other district would show the same fact; viz., that the number of churches in ancient England bore a much larger proportion to the number of the population than the number does in modern England. In making such a computation we are not making an invidious comparison, but only reminding ourselves that our ancestors of six and eight centuries ago really took care to have as many churches as the population of the day required.

And as the number of fabrics provided for Divine Worship was equal to the wants of the times, so was the number of persons ordained to maintain that Divine Worship. The body of Clergy in England was, indeed, always a very large one. The manner in which they took the charge of their flocks varied somewhat in different times and districts. Before the great increase of monastic institutions, the parochial Clergy generally resided in their parishes as they do now, and were called *secular* Clergy, as living in *the world*, to distinguish them from the *regular* or non-parochial Clergy, who lived in monasteries and by monastic *rule*. When monasteries increased in number, the clerical part of the monks often took charge of the parishes surrounding their monastery, as fellows of colleges used to (and still do in many cases)

take charge of the parishes in the vicinity of the Universities. In whichever way the parishes were provided for, there is no historical evidence that they were neglected; but there is rather evidence that as much care was taken in serving the churches as in building them.

It is not very clear what was the nature of the services in the churches generally in those days. In town churches, and in village churches too, where there were several Clergy, as was often the case, the Holy Eucharist was celebrated every day, as it was in all cathedrals and monasteries. In the latter part of the Middle Ages, too, nearly every church had some endowment provided for such a daily Eucharist by particular persons, in the hope and expectation that it would benefit the souls of themselves or their friends in the other world; and the Clergy provided by these endowments were called chantry-priests. So that if a daily Eucharist was not the universal practice of churches, it was at least a very common one. How far the other daily services of the Church extended beyond towns and collegiate churches there is little evidence to show; but there is some reason to doubt whether *public* daily services—with the exception of the Holy Eucharist—were ever so common as they are in our own time. As for Sunday services, there is not the slightest reason to suppose that they were less regularly provided than

they are now. The extent to which the services so provided were analogous to those of our own Prayer Book could only be exhibited by going into much greater detail than our plan will allow. It will be sufficient to mention here that the greater portion of the offices were composed, like our own, of prayers handed down from primitive days; and that a *system* of prayers to (or for the intercession of) the Blessed Virgin and the saints was not invented until the Middle Ages were verging on the period of modern history.

There was a well-known peculiarity in the Divine Service of this intermediate period which distinguishes it from primitive times on the one hand, and from our modern Church of England on the other; this was the use of Latin prayers,—an usage retained by the Romish Church even to the present day. There can be no doubt whatever to us who have had experience of vernacular services, as to the advantage of having the whole of Divine Service in a language which can be understood by those who are joining in the act of prayer; and there seems a tendency in the Romish Church of the present day to follow the good example of the English Church in this respect. But it is remarkable that since the days when Latin and Greek were the almost universal languages of the civilized world, no church in Christendom has used an entire vernacular service except our own. In Russia the

language of Divine Service is Sclavonic, between which and the Russ spoken by the people there is about as much difference as between "Anglo-Saxon" and English. In the Greek Churches—numbering about sixteen millions of Christians—all the public prayers are said in the ancient Greek, in which they were originally composed, which is exceedingly different from the modern Greek or Romaic. While in all European Churches except our own, Divine Service is said in the language in which it was said at the time when Latin was spoken familiarly in every European nation under the sway of the Roman Empire.

This universal usage may probably be traced up to an universal necessity. The modern languages of Europe, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and English, are to a great extent built up out of the Latin; and we cannot even tell what were the tongues spoken in these countries before the Roman conquest introduced Latin[9]. In the first introduction of Divine Worship by missionaries who had not the gift of tongues, it was absolutely necessary for them to celebrate it in their own language, and in almost every country of Europe those missionaries, being Romans, would also find abundance of persons speaking the Latin tongue. This necessity, and the reluctance to risk irreverence and mistakes in

[9] There is considerable uncertainty about the claim of the Welsh to be the original inhabitants of England.

translating the services into barbarous half-formed languages, would tend to give the Latin a permanent footing; and the more so, as the transitional state of languages which resulted from the breaking up of the Roman Empire gave another and very forcible reason for the use of one fixed and unchangeable in the Church. It must be remembered also that the idea of public prayer in ancient days kept more prominently in view the speaking words of prayer to God, than the speaking them for the edification of the people; and hence, while preaching and the reading of the Scriptures were—the former always, the latter mostly—in the vernacular, it was not thought essential to have the prayers so, since it was not considered *essential* for the people to understand them.

In our own country, Welsh, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and Norman French were successively dominant languages; but as the three first were contemporaries for some centuries before the Norman conquest, so they were all contemporary between that era and the development of the mixed and comprehensive language which we now speak, and which began to emerge out of Anglo-Saxon and Latin about the end of the twelfth century. It is also the opinion of some who have searched into the question, that during this period of linguistic transition and fusion, the Latin language was understood by a larger number of the inhabitants of England than any

one of the others; it being very generally learnt with the native tongue as a medium of communication, just as English is now learned by Welsh children, and Latin itself, by the Hungarians.

All this may well give us the impression, that however great a blessing it is to have the services of our Church in English, our ancestors of Mediæval times were not so entirely deprived of the blessing of a service in a language that they understood when that service was said in Latin, as most of us would be in the present day. And while it is more than doubtful whether any one of the other languages then spoken would have been more *generally* intelligible, it may also be allowed that the expediency of preserving the Liturgy intact in its original tongue presented itself more forcibly to conscientious men of that day, than it does to conscientious men of our own. The case was the same in other countries.

As English became developed, and became the universal language of people dwelling in England, a strong desire for vernacular services sprung up; which was gratified, first by the translation of the Gospels and Epistles in the services; then by the translation of the Litany (more than two hundred years before the Reformation); by interlinear English translations of many parts of Divine Service[1]; and by English translations of the Gospels,

[1] A very ancient example of a Mediæval interlinear Prayer Book exists in the Library of University College, Oxford.

the New Testament, and the whole of the Holy Bible. Of all of these, specimens exist which must be contemporary with the earliest formation of the English language; and other specimens still earlier in Anglo-Saxon. It need hardly be added, that the number of devotional books and Bibles or portions of the Bible in the Latin language, which still remain among the manuscripts of our public and private libraries [2], is so great as to show a very abundant provision of them for the ages in which they were transcribed; and an application of labour to the service of religion which, in this particular case alone, must fill with admiration the minds of those who take the pains to calculate what the production of a single manuscript book involves.

Experience of human nature will not permit us to believe that this abundant provision of the means by which the Church does the work of saving souls for Christ could have been altogether useless; or that they were made in ages which were yet so sunk in spiritual darkness that the knowledge and power of the truth of Christ, of which they *ought* to have been the media, were not conveyed by them. There is a superintending Providence at work in the spiritual, as well as in the temporal affairs of the world; and as we all entertain in substance the belief expressed in the crude proverb,

[2] And, sad to say, forming the *covers* of Puritan books. The Latin Scriptures provided the Puritans with their chief supply of waste parchment.

"God takes care of those who take care of themselves," so we must believe that the hand of God was upon the Church of those ages for good, in which so much care was taken to provide the world with places to worship in, with a ministry to carry on that worship, and with the literary means of making that worship intelligent on the part of those who joined in it. When we have fairly considered in our minds the difference between the intellectual condition of those times, painfully supplied by incessant hand-labour with books, and our own, overwhelmed with the productions of the steam-printing press; and when we have, if need be, exercised our charity towards them, we may have good reason for entertaining the hopes we should wish to entertain, that multitudes, even in those dark ages, gained a saving knowledge of Christ, and were numbered by Him among the flocks of His elect fold.

A different conclusion from this is however to be found, or to be arrived at, in the pages of the very unhistoric histories to which, in modern times, general readers are indebted for their acquaintance with ancient days. It will therefore be desirable to show some further evidence on the point, that churches, Clergy, and books really did convey such knowledge as was likely to carry with it the blessing of God. The shortest way,—and the plan of this volume binds us always to take the shortest way,—of doing this, will

be to observe the extent to which Holy Scripture was made the basis of religious knowledge, according to primitive practice, and, be it said humbly, according to the practice of the modern Church of England.

It is difficult to believe that any large proportion of the common people could have been habitual readers of books, in the days which preceded the invention of paper and printing. There were indeed many schools in England, every monastery and collegiate church providing one, and others existing independently; and here and there we find instances of great and highly educated men who had sprung from the labouring classes[3]; but yet the difficulty and expense of producing written parchment books must always have been a bar to the spread of any general inclination for the acquisition or the practice of the faculty of reading. The knowledge which is now supposed to be gained by the poor from the perusal of the Holy Bible—much less it is to be feared than is generally supposed—must certainly have been gained, if at all, from oral instruction. It was, in fact, in those days as it had been in all days before that great era of the world's history which began with the discovery of paper-making and the art of printing; for before then the ability to read could never have been general among any people, Jew, heathen, or Christian. The ordinary way of com-

[3] Pope Adrian IV. began life as an English ploughboy.

municating knowledge to mankind had always been that of oral instruction; and, in the case of religious knowledge, by the public reading of Holy Scripture and by preaching.

Thus we are brought to the question, What opportunities had the common people, or the people at large, gentle and simple (for the rich should be cared for as well as the poor), of hearing from their teacher's lips the truths of the Gospel, in Gospel language?

1. In the first place, it must be remembered that the system of Gospels and Epistles now in use in the English Church is the same, with a few exceptions, as that which was in use in that Church in Mediæval times: that the Psalms of David were publicly sung Sunday after Sunday, in every church, and in many churches day by day, as is still happily, the case; and that Scriptural Lessons formed part of the services, though on a plan different from our own, selected portions being read, on the plan of the Epistles and Gospels in the Communion Service, instead of the whole Bible, chapter by chapter. The only weak point about the Mediæval system of using Scripture in the daily and Sunday services, was the occasional substitution (in later times) of uninspired writings for the ordinary course of Scripture lessons. This is referred to in the Preface to our Prayer Book as an abuse which had arisen "these many years past," by which we must probably understand a

century or so before the period of the Reformation at which the compilers of our Prayer Book were writing. Substantially, therefore, the public use of Holy Scripture in the public services of the Mediæval Church was about the same as in our own: and we may hope that notwithstanding the delay in meeting the changes of language, there was much spiritual profit accruing to Christians from such an usage, and that God did not withhold His blessing from the devout and reverent reading of His Holy Word.

2. The Scriptures were also habitually referred to, and quoted very largely by the Mediæval preachers; a circumstance which shows both that they were familiar with them, and that they made them the basis of their teaching. Such men as the Venerable Bede, in the eighth century, preached thus respecting Holy Scripture. "Let us go forth," he says, commenting on Nehemiah viii. 15, "Let us go forth out of the house of our every-day thoughts, to that lofty mountain of the Holy Scriptures, so well fitted for constant meditation; and let us bring back from thence for ourselves, like olive-branches, the fruits of mercy, wherewith if we refresh the poor we may also shelter ourselves from the burning heat of the vices that assail us. Let us bring also branches of 'the goodliest of trees' (which name the Jews gave to the cedar) to wit, the fruits of love, the goodliest and most excellent among all the virtues, through which our Lord suffered Himself to be crucified for our salvation.

And let us bring branches of myrtle to signify the mortification of our lusts and all our vices; for the wise men also, by their offering of myrrh to the Lord have taught us in a figure that those who are Jesus Christ's should 'crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts.' Even in the same manner, he brings 'myrtle boughs' to shade himself under, who can say, 'we are a sweet smelling savour unto God.' Let us also bring 'palm-branches,' the ornament of the conqueror's hand; that we may maintain a constant victory over luxury, wrath, avarice, and all other vices; being ever concerned to be superior to all our enemies, as we would deserve hereafter to be the companions of those respecting whom St. John says in the Revelation, 'They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms were in their hands.' Branches of 'thick trees,' also let us bring, to wit, the adornments of all other virtues. Of all these we make to ourselves mystical 'tabernacles,' whensoever, delighting in good deeds, we wholly abstract the mind from worldly allurements.'[4]"

About the same period also, Alcuin preached to this effect. "The reading of Holy Scripture is the knowledge of everlasting blessedness. In the Holy Scriptures man may contemplate himself, as in a mirror, what manner of person he is. Just so is the reading of Holy Scripture. It cleanseth the soul, it bringeth to mind the

[4] Bede, Giles's Ed. ix. 30.

fear of hell-punishment, and raiseth one's heart to the joy above. The man who wishes ever to be with God; he should often pray to Him; and he should often read the Holy Scriptures. For when we pray we speak to God, and when we read the Holy Books, then God speaks to us. It is a twofold joy which the reading of the Holy Books bringeth to the readers; first, that it so instructs their understandings as to render them more acute; and also that it leads them from this world's vanities to the love of God. . . . . Very happy is he who reads the Holy Scriptures if he turns his words into deeds. All the Holy Scripture is written for our health, and thereby we may understand the truth."

In the Ordination Service of the "Anglo-Saxon" Church, again, were these two questions and answers,—

"Will you apply all the wisdom you are able to the study of Holy Scripture?

"Even so, with all my heart.

"Will you teach the people committed to your charge, both by word and example, the truth which you learn from the Holy Scripture?

"I will."

And in accordance with this is the lesson left on record in the writings of Ælfric, who lived shortly before the Conquest. "All preachers that take not their doctrine and examples out of the Holy Books are like those of whom Christ Himself has said, 'If the blind

lead the blind, then shall they both fall into some blind pit;' but such preachers as take their examples and doctrines from thence, whether it be out of the Old Testament or the New, are such as Christ Himself spake of in these words, 'Every learned scribe in the Church of God is like the master of a family, who ever brings forth out of his treasure things new and old[5].'"

Let us now pass the time of the Conquest, and come upon that of William Rufus and Archbishop Anselm. The sermons of the latter are of the most spiritual character, and replete with Gospel expressions and truths. Let us content ourselves with quoting, partly for its beauty, partly for its reverent detailed application of the work of our Lord, a passage in which he gives a private address, as in our "Visitation of the Sick," to a person in sickness. "See while life remaineth in thee that thou rest not thy trust in anything save the death of Christ. Trust in nothing else but this; commit thyself wholly to this; cover thyself wholly with this; mingle thyself wholly with this; clothe thyself altogether with this. And if the Lord will judge thee, say, Lord, I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between myself and Thy judgment, otherwise I will not engage in judgment with Thee. If He shall say to thee, Thou art a sinner, say, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my sins. If He shall say to thee, Thou hast deserved

[5] Ælfric on the New Testament.

damnation, say, Lord, I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my evil deserts, and I offer His merits for that merit which I ought to have, and have not. If He shall say, I am angry with thee, say, Lord, I cast the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and Thy displeasure [6]."

It will be sufficient to finish these examples of mediæval preaching with part of a confirmation sermon which remains, among many other discourses, delivered by Peter of Blois, Archdeacon of Bath, and private secretary to Thomas à Becket. This is given as belonging to a time when the Church of England has been supposed to have been most dark, and by a person who was the cherished friend and adviser of an Archbishop often taken as the very type of Mediæval unspirituality. The preacher adopts the rhetorical figure of Satan pleading against the sinner at the last day, as he did against Job:—

"This man renounced in baptism me and all my works and all my pomps; and then, forgetful of his promise, as quickly as he could he surrendered himself to him whom he had renounced, went about his work, and took delight in his vanities. But when he came to a sense of what he had done, he changed his determination for the better. Be it so, that he returned to Thee; be it so that '*the wicked*

[6] This exhortation formed part of the Visitation Office for the Sick in the Mediæval service books.

forsook his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts[7],' and went back to Thee, and Thou didst have mercy on him. Be it so: it is manifest that he again altered his resolution for the worse, and the '*latter end of that man was worse than the first*[8].' I will prove it. Remember, I beseech Thee, that before Thy vicar, before Thine anointed, before Thy minister, he renewed the covenant of baptism, and bound himself by the promise which he again uttered. Here at least he cannot excuse himself on account of age; he cannot assert that he came by compulsion; he cannot pretend insufficiency. He came before Thy minister, of full understanding and not in infancy; he promised voluntarily, and not by over persuasion; he boldly and freely took on his shoulders a burden which he could have borne. What more? In one and the same moment, he departed from Thy minister and forsook his promise; he deceived Thy priest, he deceived Thee, he deceived himself; he cast away *Thy light yoke and easy burden*[9], and embraced the ancient slavery of sin: *he cast away the garment of innocence, and again took up that which he had left with his Egyptian mistress*[10]. And wilt Thou not, O righteous Judge, allow that *he* is a betrayer, who, when *he has eaten of Thy bread, has lifted up 'his heel against thee*[11]*?*' Was not *the hand of him that betrayed Thee with Thee on the*

[7] Isa. lv. 7. [8] St. Matt. xii. 45. [9] St. Matt. xi. 30.
[10] Gen. xxxix. 15. [11] Ps. xli. 9.

table[1], when this man, who *ate the bread of angels*[2], the *bread which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world*[3], nevertheless cast in his lot with Thine enemies, '*walked in the counsel of the ungodly, stood in the way of sinners; and,*' which is more wicked yet, yea, which is most wicked of all, glories that he '*sat in the seat of the scornful*[4]*?*' Either allow that he is a betrayer, or reject Thine Augustine, who expressly says, that 'his sin is as great who betrays Christ to sinful members, as his was who gave Him up to the Jews that crucified Him.'"

In this short passage it will be observed that there are nine distinct quotations or paraphrases of Holy Scripture, some taken from the Old and others from the New Testament; that they are not quoted as if the preacher had looked up the verses from a Concordance at his elbow, but as if the language of the Bible was so ingrained into his memory, that it came more readily to hand than any other; and that the whole passage has a smack of Scriptural phraseology about it which leads to the same conclusion. It may also be added that in another of this writer's sermons, the first in the volume, and an Advent sermon, these are the portions of Scripture which are quoted; and they are enumerated

[1] St. Luke xxii. 21.
[2] Ps. lxxviii. 25.
[3] St. John vi. 51.
[4] Ps. i. 1.

in detail as the best sort of evidence that can be given on the point in question:—John v. 2; Matt. i. 21; Ps. lxxxiv. 12; 1 Cor. x. 6; John i. 29; Luke i. 35; also, i. 28; Prov. xxxi. 10; Gen. iii. 15; Isa. ii. 1, and xl. 3; Heb. ii. 8; Dan. vii. 9; Micah v. 2; Dan. x. 15; Matt. xxi. 9; Ps. cx. 2; John ix. 7; 2 Kings xviii. 17; 1 Kings xxii. 38; Matt. iv. 16; Heb. ix. 13; Lev. xii. 13; Luke viii. 43; Lam. iv. 2; John vii. 37; Matt. v. 17; 1 Cor. i. 19; Isa. xi. 15; Mark i. 7; Ps. lxxiii. 12; Matt. iv. 25; Isa. lxiii. 3; Matt. xii. 29; Acts iv. 32; John xiv. 27; Ps. lxxi. 6; and lxxvii. 65.

Such are a few of the illustrations of Mediæval Scriptural preaching and teaching which come most readily to hand. The number might be increased almost *ad infinitum* out of the volumes of such writings as still remain to us, but it would be beyond the purpose of this work to do so, and we may therefore go on to another point.

3. A large proportion of the learning of the clergy in Mediæval times was applied to the exposition of Holy Scripture in the form of commentaries: a kind of work always appreciated highly by the laity, and manifestly intended in no small degree for their use. The Venerable Bede thus employed much of his time, and several volumes of his commentaries are included in his works. Alcuin commented on the Psalms and the Pentateuch,

and Aimo, his pupil, on Isaiah. Paschasius Radbertus (A.D. 840) was a commentator on Jeremiah, and the Gospel of St. Matthew. Rabanus Maurus expounded the Pentateuch, Judges, Ruth, Kings, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, in the Old Testament; St. Matthew's Gospel and the Epistles of St. Paul in the New. Archbishop Lanfranc was also a commentator on St. Paul's Epistles, in the midst of all his business and his troubles. Another English Archbishop, Stephen Langton (to whose patriotism we chiefly owe Magna Charta), wrote commentaries on the historical books of the Old Testament as far as Nehemiah, and also on Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; and it was he who divided the Bible into chapters as we now have it. Alexander of Hales, in the middle of the thirteenth century, was a laborious worker in the same path; and we may close the list with John Blunt, Blount, or Blondus, who died in 1248, and was a voluminous writer on Holy Scripture. He was Divinity Professor at Oxford, Prebendary and Chancellor of York; and was also elected Archbishop of Canterbury, but never consecrated, the appointment having been superseded by the Pope simply in assertion of his usurped authority. If to these English commentators, we add the wonderful works of Thomas Aquinas and Nicolas de Lyra, from which every subsequent commentator on Scripture has been a very large borrower, it will be seen, even from this imperfect cata-

logue of names, how much attention was paid to the interpretation of the Bible, and it may be said also with candour, to its spiritual application.

Thus, we have here some evidence, a very small specimen of what it is possible to bring forward, to show that the religion of the Middle Ages was not, after all, so different in character from that of our own times; and that there is ample reason to believe and to hope that men knew the truths of the Holy Gospel, were built up in the saving knowledge of Christ, had the means of grace set before them, and found their Church a way of life, even before the happy days of printed Bibles, vernacular services, and an expurgated Liturgy. There are many minor evidences which might have been adduced in support of what has been given. It would be natural, for example, in treating of the subject at greater length, to show how much real self-devotion was involved in the expenditure of money, time, skill, and labour on the cathedrals, parish churches, manuscript Bibles and Prayer Books, and other accessories of devotion; to show by the frescoed walls, stained windows, and pictured books, how every means possible was used to fill the eye as well as the ear with the teaching of the Bible. But we will content ourselves with referring to those things only which may more properly come under the name of the means of grace; and these are enough to show that the ministrations of the sanctuary and the

Scriptural character of ministerial teaching were such as we may look back upon with grateful thanksgiving to God, who never suffered the Light of His Truth to be extinguished in our Church, nor the streams of His grace to fail.

§. *Blots in the Church of the Middle Ages.*

It has not happened, however, in any age of the Church of Christ, or to any branch of it, that she should be altogether unsullied by impurity; and it now becomes our duty to look at some of the blots which disfigured the surface of the Mediæval Church, and gradually cankered down so far into her substance as to make the Reformation necessary. Of the abuse of Papal authority we have already spoken at length, and it will not be necessary to say any thing further here, than that the peculiar and characteristic errors of the later Mediæval Church in England are clearly to be traced up to the undue influence which the Roman Church obtained in our own; though of course it is little apology for ourselves to say that our errors were importations, and not of native growth.

1. The most serious of all Mediæval errors, and that which was most bitterly complained of by some early precursors of the Reformation, was the administration of the Holy Communion to the laity by means of one element only instead of by both. There is reason to

think that this denial of the cup to the laity had not become at all general until the beginning of the fifteenth century, and that the custom of communion in one kind, except in the case of persons who were unable (from sickness) to partake of both kinds, was altogether unknown before the twelfth century. So asserts or admits Cardinal Bona[5], the greatest of Roman writers on liturgical subjects; for in his treatise upon them he declares that "always, every where, from the very first foundation of the Church to the twelfth century, the faithful always communicated under the species both of bread and wine; and about the beginning of that century the use of the cup began to decline, many Bishops interdicting it to the people on account of the danger of irreverence and of spilling. The practice grew up about the same time with the excessive and irreverent definitions as to the manner of our Lord's Presence in the Eucharist, which were consolidated in the dogma of transubstantiation. When this dogma began to spread among the Bishops and clergy of the twelfth century, it was consistent that they should discourage the administration of the cup to the laity on two grounds: the first, that the holy gift bestowed could be received as perfectly under one kind as under both; the second, that which is expressed by

[5] Rer. Liturg. ii. 18, note 1. See also S. Thom. Aq. in Joan. vi. 7; Cassander § 22; and even the Council of Constance itself in Sess. xiii.

Cardinal Bona, the danger of irreverence through spilling any of the fluid element from the chalice. At first, the practice was protested against. The Council of Clermont (A.D. 1095) decrees that all communicants shall receive the Body and Blood of Christ under both kinds, unless there should be some lawful reason to the contrary; and this Council was even presided over by Pope Urban II. A century later (A.D. 1175), an Archbishop of Canterbury, in Convocation, forbad the new usage in its earlier form, that of giving the one element steeped in the other: a form which had given discontent to the laity, and had been protested against by not a few divines. In later years, the question became a subject of much controversy; and as there were many clergymen who adhered to the old opinion, so there can be no doubt there were many who adhered to the old practice, and gave the Holy Communion to their people in its integrity. It was a grievous disappointment to multitudes of good men, when the Council of Constance, in 1415, instead of forbidding the novel custom, as was expected, established it as the general usage of the Church; and both abroad as well as in England, there were found those who seriously remonstrated at this enormous change in the custom of the Church. In Germany the privation of the cup by the Council of Constance was so great an innovation, that some even resorted to arms in their endeavour to prevent it from being carried out.

There is some doubt whether Communion in both kinds was ever wholly discontinued in England. In 1220 directions were given to the clergy by a Synod of Durham, that they should instruct the laity as to the reality of the gift which they received in the chalice. In 1281, Archbishop Peckham's Constitutions of Lambeth enjoin priests of *the smaller churches* to instruct the laity that in those smaller churches (in hujusmodi minoribus ecclesiis) only the celebrant received the consecrated wine, the other communicants receiving wine unconsecrated, that "they might the more easily swallow the holy Body;" from which the natural inference is to be drawn, that the ancient custom of giving both elements was continued in other and larger churches. In 1287, a Synod of Exeter gave an instruction to the clergy of that diocese exactly similar to that given to the Durham clergy sixty-seven years before. Thus it would certainly appear that the novel practice gained ground very slowly, at least in our own Church, and that there was so much resistance to it as to indicate a persistence on the part of many in the ancient and orthodox usage, which gave their full privileges to the laity in this most important particular. So many learned divines have decided that if the consecration of the Holy Eucharist in both kinds is completed by the participation of them by the celebrant, each element contains the whole gift conveyed, that we may hope devout communicant

received the grace of the Sacrament even when the cup was denied them. Yet we may well entertain the belief that a fuller measure of grace may be expected from a reception in both kinds according to the institution of our Lord and the custom of the Church for twelve hundred years; and we cannot but grieve over the innovation which was established by the Council of Constance, and which has, since the Council of Trent, become the practice of all Roman Catholic Churches. It is the worst consequence of that theological refinement, the doctrine of transubstantiation (or annihilation of the natural elements of the Blessed Sacrament), which is peculiar to the Roman Church; and we may be doubly thankful that our own Church has kept clear of such subtleties in doctrine when we perceive the practical error into which this one has led.

2. Another important characteristic belonging to the latter age of the Mediæval Church was the granting of indulgences for the release of souls from the punishment which they would otherwise suffer for their sins, either in this life or in purgatory. The "Romish doctrine concerning purgatory" is condemned by our twenty-second Article; and the "pardons" mentioned immediately after purgatory in the same Article, are the "indulgences" of which we are now speaking. In the first edition of the XXXIX Articles, "the doctrine of the school authors" concerning purgatory was con-

demned; but this was thought too broad, and "Romish doctrine" was substituted when the revision of the Articles took place.

The Romish doctrine of purgatory is, in fact, a distortion of an opinion which has found a place in the minds of many sober-thinking and pious Christians in all ages, viz., that the soul will at some period before its reunion to the body at the general resurrection undergo some kind of cleansing or purgation, by which it will be purified from the stain of those sins which it has committed since its first cleansing in Holy Baptism. As according to the ninth Article of Religion, the "infection of nature" through original sin "doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated;" so it is supposed by many Christians that the stain of sin remains on the soul even after absolution; that this stain is not cleansed off by the separation of the soul from the body; and that some future cleansing is provided for it by God, which it will undergo before it rejoins the body and enters into a state of perfect bliss after the resurrection. The form of belief respecting this cleansing of the disembodied soul has varied among good men, but this is the general substance of what is to be found on the subject in the writings of men like the great St. Augustine; and it was probably the belief in such an imperfected condition of the soul in the intermediate state which led to the usage of *praying* for the departed,

that they might enjoy light, peace, and refreshment, as well as *thanking* God that they had left a world of sin and entered into rest. An instinctive belief pervades the minds of most of us, that, as there will be a future transition of the souls that are in a disembodied state while in Paradise to a far higher perfection when they enter, re-embodied, into heaven, so their present intermediate condition is a state of progress towards that perfection; that though souls in Paradise can fall no more, yet they can rise to a higher state of holiness than that in which they left this world; and that as Christian souls departed were benefited by the prayers of their friends and the Church while they were living, so they will be benefited by those prayers also while they are in the intermediate state of separation from the body.

This is not the place to defend this doctrine, or to consider it in the way of argument. It need only be added that there is much in it which appeals to the best feelings of the Christian mind. The humble Christian, when dying, will have a strong consciousness that some further cleansing of his soul from the stain of sin is needed than that which is given by the absolution of the penitent, the Blessed Sacrament, and all other means by which the blood of Christ, shed for all, is applied to individuals; he will feel that his then condition is a long way from fitness for the purity and bliss of a perfect heaven and the unveiled Presence of

God; and he will find reason for pious thanksgiving if he can thus feel that the intermediate state is a state of progress from a lower to a higher degree of holiness, as the state of this life has been one of probation. It may be observed further, that if this view of the intermediate state is a true one, prayers for the dead, that they may become more and more perfect, are entirely justifiable; and we can see why they were used by the early Christians, as well as why the Church of England has been careful never to condemn them.

But the "Romish doctrine concerning purgatory" is quite different from this. Every soul which departs this life impenitent is supposed to go at once to the last place of torment past recal. Every soul which departs this life penitent, and in the love of God, is supposed to go into a purgatory of material fire, where, by a torment which varies in length (extending in some cases over thousands of years), it expiates the guilt of the sins which it had done in the body, and which (even after repentance and absolution) cannot be expiated except by such suffering. The prayers of the living, the offering of the Holy Eucharist, indulgences granted to the tormented soul in its lifetime here for good works done,—these may shorten the period of its suffering in purgatory, but through that suffering it must pass before it can enter into its rest. Respecting this doctrine the Church of England justly says that it is "grounded upon

no warranty of Scripture, but" is, "rather, repugnant to the Word of God[6]."

That belief in purgatory, as the Church of Rome enjoined it in the age preceding the Reformation, was a comparative novelty, was confessed by that learned and venerable English opponent of the Reformation, Bishop Fisher, who died for his principles. "No orthodox person," he says, "now doubts whether there be a purgatory; and yet by those ancients there was not any mention made of it whatever, or, if any, the rarest possible. Nay, by the Greeks, even to the present day, the very existence of purgatory is disbelieved. Let any one who will, read the commentaries of the Greek Fathers, and he will find that they never (if I mistake not), or at any rate, as seldom as possible, speak of purgatory. Nor even did the Latins all at once receive this truth. Since then purgatory was *so late in being known*, and admitted by the universal Church, can any man wonder, that of a practice connected with the belief of it there was no instance to be found in the early ages of the Church[7]?" "As long as there was no care about purgatory," he says again, "no one sought for indulgences; for it is on purgatory that all regard for indulgences depends. If you take away purgatory, for what will you want indul-

[6] Article XXII.

[7] Fisher adv. Luther, art. 18, quoted in Phillpott's Letters to Butler, p. 146.

gences? We shall not have the smallest need of them, if there be no purgatory. . . . . Since then purgatory was so late in being known and received in the Church, can any one wonder respecting indulgences, that there was no use of them in the early ages of the Church[8]?"

As early, indeed, as the time of the Venerable Bede, there were stories afloat (of a very similar character to some incidents of the "Pilgrim's Progress") of persons who had died and afterwards returned to life again, and who narrated what they had seen in the other world; and these stories were, and are still, very freely used by those who support the doctrine of purgatory as an evidence of its truth. But in reality, no general belief in purgatory can be proved until we arrive at a much later period of history; and the earliest instances of indulgences probably indicate the time at which this belief began to prevail. These are traced no higher than the twelfth century, as the Romanists themselves acknowledge[9]; and it was not without great opposition that the custom of granting them was, in the fourteenth century (under Boniface VIII. and Clement V.), brought into general use. The settlement of "the Romish doctrine

[8] Ibid. p. 160.

[9] In primitive times the martyrs were allowed to claim indulgence for those of their friends who were under church censures; these indulgences, however, had no reference whatever to the *intermediate* state, but only to the external discipline of the Church exercised on sinners in this life.

concerning purgatory" may, in fact, be traced to that great Council of Lateran, the fourth of that name, which was held under Pope Innocent III. in 1213: when more than a thousand Bishops were seduced into petrifying this and other pernicious dogmas, which had till then been floating loosely here and there as private opinions, in the Christian world.

Thus it will be seen that the Mediæval Church was not at all committed, as a body, to the doctrine of purgatory, until its time was beginning to draw to a close; and that for twelve hundred years after Christ, indulgences were unknown. The resistance to these which was offered during the following three centuries occasionally crops out in the ecclesiastical history of the period,—in the accounts of the Albigenses, Lollards, Wicliffe, and Huss,—long before Luther preached against Tetzler; and that resistance shows that the imposition of these doctrines was a yoke under which the Mediæval Church was as restless as it was under the privation of its proper privileges in the denial of the cup to the laity. Would that such restlessness had never been compelled into quietude in so large a portion of the later Church, by the furiousness and party spirit of those who had the better side to defend, but defended it with so much bitterness and imprudence! But it is to be feared that since the Reformation the belief of Romanists in Purgatory is

of even a more extravagant character than it was in the latter half of the Middle Ages; and that even more and more systematic folly and profanity are mixed up with that belief. Would we could believe otherwise.

3. With the mention of one other blot on the face of the Mediæval Church, we may conclude this thankless but necessary branch of our historical comments. There can be no doubt that, in addition to the ancient divine offices of the Church, other offices were originated from time to time, in which the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints were introduced in a manner that it is impossible to reconcile with their true position as human, though glorified, beings in the Church invisible. In the formal language of prayer, the saints were originally invoked only in the at least harmless, if not theologically justifiable, phrase, "Ora pro nobis." But as the corruptions of purgatorial doctrine spread over the centuries immediately preceding the Reformation, expressions were used in the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, which could bear no other meaning to a man of plain understanding, than that the holy departed were able of themselves to assist sinners in both spiritual and temporal difficulties, and that prayers and praises were offered to them in as direct a manner as to God Himself. This dishonour put upon God, upon the

Blessed Virgin, and the saints of lesser rank, is explained away by Roman theologians, with reference both to the past and the present; but one can scarcely allow that their explanations amount to any thing more than special pleading, and certainly it is a special pleading which does not meet the customs of their own ignorant coreligionists as a body, if it does meet the case of intelligent or learned Romanists.

It is a consolation to find with respect to the Mediæval Church, that, in spite of the authorized introduction of such usages, faith in Christ as the one Mediator and channel of mercy yet remained stronger than belief in the value of intercessions offered by saints. "Jesu Mercy" is to be found on almost every tomb where there is any inscription at all: "Ora pro nobis" is the strongest form of intercession to be found on such memorials where there is any reference at all to the intercessions of saints. Wherever there is stained glass or sculpture we are sure to meet frequently with the figure of our Blessed Lord in His passion or His triumph, or in some portion of His acts as recorded in the Gospels; and even in the well-known figure of the Madonna, it must be remembered that no idolatrous token of the Virgin was intended, but a symbol of that essential doctrine of the Incarnation, in the declaration of our belief in which the Virgin Mother has a place and a name in conjunction with that of the

Holy Child, as well in our Christian creeds as in our Christian art. We must sincerely hope that our anxiety to find good in the Mediæval Church, and to recognize our mediæval ancestors as Christian brethren who were worshippers with ourselves of one Lord, believers with ourselves in one faith, and christianed with ourselves by one baptism, will never lead us to apologize for error; but at the same time we cannot help hoping, too, that mediæval Christians and modern Roman Christians as well, have often been honestly endeavouring to honour Christ and to gain His blessing and grace, when they have been using words and gestures with which we could not sympathize; and that what seems to us an excessive veneration of holy men is not really to those who practise it a forsaking of the one only God. A candid and charitable mind will hesitate long before venturing to accuse every mediæval Christian who prayed before the image of a saint, or used imprudent words of excessive reverence for saints in those prayers, of the hateful crime of idolatry; and it will not give up the hope that myriads of such prayers were offered in simple faith and humility, accepted graciously by a merciful Forgiver of our weaknesses and mistakes, and responded to in due time by One who has much to look over even in the most enlightened and orthodox of us all.

So let us bid farewell to the blots with which our glorious Church was disfigured in those long-past Middle Ages,

not the less thankful that they, at least, do not disfigure it in these later days on which we are cast.

Having now given some account of the more essential features of the Mediæval Church, let us go on to sketch out some accidental characteristics of the religion of those times which are generally connected with them in the minds of any who are thinking of the period in question. In doing so we may confine ourselves chiefly to two of these peculiar characteristics or great phenomena of that age of the Church, viz., the Monastic system and the Crusades.

§. *Monastic Institutions.*

Although monasteries attained such a height as they did in the Middle Ages, they were not peculiar to that period. There were institutions of a similar character, if not identical in all particulars, almost from the beginning of Christianity; there were such also before the time of Christianity among the Jews, and there are such in abundance among the Buddhists and the Mahometans at the present day.

As Christian institutions, monasteries took their rise from the days of persecution. In the Decian persecution (A.D. 250—3), and again in that of Dioclesian (A.D. 303—13) many Christians took refuge in the deserts, where they were obliged to lead lives of great privation. Some of them became so attached to such a kind of life,

that they still continued to pursue it after the necessity for doing so had passed away. These gradually acquired distinctive names, some being called *Ἀσκηταί*, Ascetics, —men training, or exercising, or disciplining themselves, as St. Paul says, "herein do I *exercise* myself" (*ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἀσκῶ*). Others went by the name of *Ἀναχωρηταί*, Anchorites—men who had retired from the world; while others again were named *Ἐρημίται*, hermits—men of the desert. These were not especially clergymen; perhaps seldom so, for the clergy had their duties in society. They were more generally laymen, driven out of society at first by persecution, who found it good for themselves, or thought it so, to remain apart from the world, that they might give themselves altogether to the practice of religion; or else men who retired from among their fellow men, that they might retire from a life which surrounded them with temptation.

Some of these primitive hermits were very good. There was St. Anthony for example. When quite a youth, a strong inward appeal was made to his conscience—"Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor;" and he followed the precept literally. First, he set up a hermitage near Heraclea, in Egypt, his native town, where he lived a very strict and ascetic life, and spent his time in the study of the Holy Scriptures. Then, when followed by many disciples, he retired in his humility to the catacombs, that he might escape from their importunities,

and afterwards he lived in an old ruined castle on a mountain side for about twenty years. During the persecution of Maximinus, Anthony quitted his desert life and its safety, that he might go and encourage the martyrs, when he, of course, shared much of their dangers. As he grew older he became better known; crowds of people followed him every where to learn from his lips; and at the time of his death, in A.D. 356, at the age of a hundred and five, as many as 15,000 of his followers are said to have adopted his mode of life. Anthony was an intimate friend of St. Athanasius, who wrote his life; and the friendship of that great and holy man would alone be an indication that the piety of St. Anthony was real and solid.

But all these desert recluses were not like St. Anthony. Eccentric habits grew up among them, and some adopted practices as the essential part of their religion which remind us of the Indian devotees who still exist among the Brahmins. It requires a peculiar cast of mind to recognize the reality of a piety which abstracted itself from all the duties and charities of life, never washed itself or changed its clothes, and made the whole duty of man to consist in standing on the top of a pillar, or in some other very unpractical, odd, and comfortless position all the days of its life. Simeon Stylites originated the race of pillar hermits,—his own surname being taken from στύλος, a pillar—about the beginning of the fourth

century. He began his lifelong course of pillar devotion by standing for a few years on a column, the summit of which was only six cubits from the ground. The height was gradually increased, until he was in almost as elevated a position as the Duke of York in St. James's Park, or Lord Nelson in Trafalgar Square, or Lord Hill at Shrewsbury, or Lord Grey at Newcastle, or Lord Melville at Edinburgh; and so he stood at one height and another for forty-seven years. One of his followers is said to have done the same for sixty-eight years, with this difference, that he stood on one leg instead of two. A jesting preacher would probably say that such religion had, not two nor one, but "no leg" at all "to stand on:" and though his opinion might differ from that of many good men, there can be little sympathy in the modern mind towards this curious and gymnastic sect of Christians. All one can do is to hope they were good Christians in spite of themselves and their legs.

But these oddities were peculiar to Eastern minds and bodies; and even among Eastern recluses there were many like St. Anthony, the father of Monasticism, who were not given to them, though very strict and self-denying in more reasonable ways.

After persecution had ceased, large numbers of the hermits formed societies for the purpose of living in common, calling themselves by the name of *κοινόβιοι*—cœno-

bites (from two words, κοινος = common and βιος = life); and thus were formed the first actual monasteries among Christians. They were of a simple and voluntary character at first, but when St. Basil [A.D. 329—379] put them into a more definite form, he probably introduced the practice of vows, which in early times were binding upon the monks as long as they resided in the monastery, but permitted them to leave and give up the monastic life when they pleased.

It has already been mentioned that St. Anthony was the real founder of the monastic system, and that St. Athanasius was his intimate friend. It was by St. Athanasius himself that the novel system was introduced into Europe, and after his day it made great progress under such good men as St. Augustine, Gregory of Tours, and others of a similar character, and by them monasticism consolidated into a much better and more practical form than that which it had assumed in the East.

It was necessary to enter into these preliminary details for the purpose of giving some general idea of the way in which the great Monastic system of the Middle Ages originated. But that system was, in fact, more indebted to the great St. Benedict than to any one else for the form in which it is best known to us. He was a man of great mental power and vigorous temperament, and to his energies the world is chiefly indebted

for the more permanent elements which have made monasticism a good or an evil in its history. St. Benedict was a native of Italy, born at Mursia, in the year 480. He adopted the hermit life, and when sought after retired into secrecy for a time, living in a cave at Sublaco. Here he was eventually discovered, and prevailed on to become Abbot of Sublaco; but the existing system of the monasteries had so many abuses, that he soon grew discontented with the position he had undertaken and the system he was called on to superintend. Resigning the post, he established a monastery on his own plan, and eventually originated twelve others of a similar character. When he died, about A.D. 545, after a very good life, he left behind him the great legacy of that code of regulations which has from that time to this, for thirteen centuries, been the fundamental law of all European monasteries, the "Regula Monachorum," which was afterwards confirmed by Gregory the Great. There were, indeed, other orders of monks, but the Benedictine was the chief in England and elsewhere. Its extent in this country may be illustrated by the fact that all our Cathedrals, except Carlisle, belonged to it, and may be said to have been founded by it; and that, at the dissolution of the monasteries in England there were 113 Abbeys and minor institutions belonging to the Order.

The monastic system in its integrity may be fairly

represented by the Benedictine monks, and we may advantageously particularize the chief features of their mode of life, which was exceedingly well adapted to the ages in which it flourished, whether suitable or not for our modern England. A monastery, then, of this character, was an institution in which a number of clergymen and laymen dwelt together for the purpose of living a religious life and doing work in and for the Church. They took three vows: the first to remain unmarried and to observe chaste lives; the second, to be obedient to the regulations under which they were to live, and to those who were intrusted with the government of the society; and the third, to live without any property of their own, giving up all for the use of the society in general. These were the vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty. The religious life contemplated by the Benedictine rule was one of active labour, as well as of frequent prayer and meditation; and the old proverb, "Laborare est orare," or "Laborare et orare" fairly represents the kind of religion which it was intended for monks to practise, and which, in well-regulated monasteries, they did practise. Services were kept up at stated hours night and day, and much private devotion also was enjoined. To this day, the custom of tolling a bell at twenty minutes before four in the afternoon (originally for the purpose of calling the monks of humblest ability from their field labour) is kept up in Durham Cathedral,

and there is a bell tolled at Ely Cathedral in the middle of the night, which no doubt has a similar origin [10].

There cannot be doubt, that whatever evils may have grown up in the monastic system, to it our country was indebted while it lasted for great national benefits, spiritual and temporal. Churches and parishes were founded by the monks; and supplied by them with clergy when they could not be supplied in any other way. They were the schoolmasters, and the only ones of their neighbourhood, for both rich and poor; a school being as commonly a part of a monastery as it is in our day of a parish. They copied out the Bible, the devotional books of their times, the classics, and other works, with great care and skill. They wrote many books, religious and secular, of great value. They were, in fact, during the Middle Ages, the barrier by which ignorance and barbarism were kept out of our country, when no other class of people would have had the inclination or the power to exclude them. Nor must it be forgotten that our greatest engineering and architectural works were undertaken by them, and most frequently at their own expense; for they were the great bridge-builders and the great architects of their age; and so diligent and skilful were they in drainage, that it became a common

[10] At Olney, in Bedfordshire, may also be heard some sweet chimes which ring out daily at the ancient hours of prayer, though now only warning the villagers of the hour of the day.

complaint after their dissolution, that the Fen countries were relapsing into a state of ruin, such as they had not been in since the monks had first taken possession of Peterborough, Thorney, Ramsey, Ely, and other such districts, and brought them under cultivation. In thinking of the old monks of the Middle Ages we must, therefore, take care to do them justice. They might be out of place in the world of the present, but they were eminently the right men in the right place for the centuries in which they existed in greatest vigour and prosperity. To *play* at monks and nuns in this day is a kind of amusement which is rightly discouraged as a mere trifling with religion; and no doubt many wise men think that a *real* revival of the monastic system is impossible. But those who were monks and nuns (for the nuns were as practical as the monks, in a feminine way), in the Middle Ages, were real, hard-working benefactors of society; and there was not a larger proportion of "black sheep" among the monastic classes than in other flocks; perhaps even fewer, for party spirit grossly exaggerated their failings, and attributed to a class the vices which existed and were detected among a few individuals.

There were, indeed, others going by the generic name of monks who were by no means so worthy of general respect as the Benedictines; and it was the conduct of these which really gave occasion to the dissolution of monasteries in England altogether. These were the

Dominican and Franciscan Friars, of whom a short account must be given. St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi were good men enough (though far from being very wise men), but their spiritual progeny became eventually the curse of England in the ages before the Reformation, adulterating the doctrine of the Church, interfering in the political government of the State, and sowing divisions wherever they gained influence.

The Friars (*frères, fratres*) were called mendicants, because their vows of poverty went beyond those of older monks. In other orders the individual monks possessed no personal property; but there was no limitation placed on the possessions belonging to the community as a corporate body. The mendicants professed to have no property, either as individuals or as corporations, and to live by begging. The begging trade was a very successful one, however, in their hands, and the vow was interpreted in a liberal way, and consequently they became extremely rich. It was in the thirteenth century that they began to gain a good footing in England; and they were not long in attaining immense power, political as well as ecclesiastical; being to the Middle Ages what the Jesuits have often been in later times. Much of their enormous power was gained through the Confessional. They had the privilege of overriding ordinary parochial arrangements, and became the most usual confessors of the more important classes of the

nation. By this means they got into the undercurrents of society, and used their position for the aggrandisement of themselves, their order, and the Pope, of whom they were far more devoted servants than the Benedictines. The monastic life of many of the Friars was a mere cloak; but those who used it were enabled by its means to force themselves into positions of great influence to which they would not otherwise have attained; and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they were concerned in all the great political transactions of the time; intriguing in every court as a kind of secret agents on behalf of the Papal power. In the end they brought themselves and the Pope into extremely bad odour in England, and drew on the Reformation.

The Mendicant Friars were often men of very scandalous life. Their rules were strict, but the means or the wish to enforce them were much wanting. And just as in our own day the clergy at large get the credit for every act of imprudence, and for every scandal which happens three or four times a year, among their body, so the Church of England of the Middle Ages has been blackened in character chiefly by a very small part of her community, these parasite orders of Friars. If there had been no monks but Benedictines, they might have remained to this day, and been a blessing to society; but it was no great wonder that the comparatively healthy part of the monastic system was weakened and

eventually destroyed in the sloughing off of these noxious excrescences.

We must not, however, leave the subject of monasticism without a word more of the less corrupt system which it was endeavoured to pourtray before our subject led us to the necessity of speaking in just condemnation of the Friars. It is evident that the principle of monasticism was not necessarily bad, but rather, good; especially, taking into account the character of the times on which it was cast. There are many who long for retirement in every age, and from various motives. In our time, most persons who do so, take, if they can afford it, a cottage in the country; where they read, fish, shoot, write verses or religious novels. But in the Middle Ages, and under the feudal abominations introduced by the Normans, men were only safe when they were banded together; so that they could not have taken cottages in the country if they would, but must of necessity build large houses which would hold numbers of persons, and very often fortify them as well. Add the fact that they wanted to retire from society, not only to be out of the way of the world, but also for the purpose of spending their days in the practice of direct acts of piety and worship, and it will at once be seen that such communities assumed of necessity also a religious character.

It is a mistake to suppose that the real monastic

system was any way connected of necessity with superstition and imposture. No doubt there were superstitious monks, and fraudulent monks, but sound history contradicts the supposition that monks were generally of such a character; while it is contrary to real experience to find so much good built up on a really rotten foundation, and lasting through so many centuries. No, the Mediæval monastic institutions were the work of great men who had great objects in view—Dunstan, Lanfranc, Anselm, Dominic and Francis themselves,—and who saw, or thought they saw, in those systems the means of civilizing and evangelizing their fellow-men. Fraud, impiety, and superstition were the occasional vices incident to them as to other great human societies, showing that men are not infallible; and there seems to have been a peculiar fatality about the Mendicants by which they attracted the worst men and the worst monks to their order. But of the monks in general, it may be truly said that they preserved our religion, our learning, our best institutions; that they built our cathedrals, our parish churches, our colleges, and our schools; that they were our great scholars and our great historians; that before the days of printing they produced all our books; and last, not least, that they drained our fens, built our bridges, and made our roads.

The monasteries laid, in fact, the foundation of that system of united action by which the subsequent great-

ness of England has been brought about, and originated those great corporations which have raised the middle classes of our country to a higher position than they occupy in any other land. They established the great principles of voluntary union and self-government which have become such special characteristics of the English race. And though those principles have since flowed out into other channels and the old ones are filled up, we must not altogether forget how much we are indebted to the ancient streams for the fertilizing civilization of our later ages.

§. *The Crusades.*

We will now go on to another of those features of a religious character which are peculiar to the middle ages. Monachism was an influence extending over every portion of the period we are now investigating: but the Crusades, which are now to occupy our attention, cover but a small portion of this great canvas, the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries.

It is a curious fact, and one which strongly illustrates the neglect under which the Christian elements of history have fallen, that no great historian of the Crusades has yet arisen. The subject is, perhaps, the grandest that could be taken up in the whole range of historic record: a subject well worthy of such a pen as Gibbon's, but one that would require a good Christian

mind to treat it with impartiality, as an un-Christian or sceptical one must necessarily be full of prejudice against wars which were carried on in professed defence of Christianity.

To understand these great wars of Mediæval Christendom, it is necessary to put away, at the outset, any sympathy with that spirit which condemns them at once on the plea that they originated in Popery, and also with that still more dangerous spirit which scoffs at every thing that is not successful, as if it must therefore be foolish. We should endeavour rather to throw ourselves back into that period of the world's life, and try to gain a sympathetic understanding of the real spirit in which such undertakings were begun: and we should also measure the results which they achieved not so much by what they accomplished towards fulfilling the intentions of men, as by considering how far they fulfilled the providential purposes of Him by whom man's best intentions are often overruled to ends that are better than those designed.

The chief object for which the Crusades were undertaken was the recovery of the Holy Land from the hands of its Mahometan conquerors; but they arose out of the system of pilgrimages to the scenes of our Lord's life and death which had been in existence almost, if not quite, from the beginning of Christianity. Jerusalem had been besieged and taken by the Romans within

forty years of our Lord's Crucifixion there, and from the year 70 it was in their possession for nearly six centuries, as the rest of the Holy Land also was. During the first half of this period heathen oppression and jealousy had kept down the light of the Christian Church there; but in the latter half it had again shone forth, and the Holy City had acquired something of its former prominence and grandeur through its association with all that Christians throughout the world held dear.

In this latter period, especially in the fifth and sixth centuries, it became the custom of many religious-minded persons to visit the Holy City for the purpose of seeing and worshipping at the spots which are so intimately connected with our Creed and our Hope. Such visits had been prevented in early times by the extreme jealousy which the heathen Emperors had entertained respecting Jerusalem, or, if made, they were made in secrecy. But when the general spread of Christianity had brought even the Emperors within its grasp, the motives for such a jealousy had passed away, and Christians began to visit the holy places in large numbers, travelling together for the sake of safety and society. Hence Jerusalem acquired a present as well as an historical interest among Christians in all parts of the world, and it was a natural longing with many to visit the city where their dear Lord had lived and died, the centre from which their religion had spread

itself abroad throughout the world. Such pilgrim caravans were encouraged by some of the Emperors, such as Justinian; and provision was made for entertaining them hospitably at the public expense. They evidently became very common—so common indeed that every large city in France and Italy provided itself with a hospital or hotel in Jerusalem or its neighbourhood for its own citizens when on their visits there.

In A.D. 614, Chosroes I., the Persian invader of the Roman Empire in the East, took Jerusalem, and with circumstances of great cruelty devastated the unfortunate city, and slaughtered its inhabitants. A few years later, A.D. 629, the Emperor Heraclius recovered it from the hands of the Persians; but it only remained seven years in those of the Christians, for the forces of Mahomet were now spreading themselves all over the East, and in A.D. 637 Jerusalem was compelled again to surrender to the Caliph Omar.

For about four centuries the Caliphs and their successors kept exclusive possession of Judæa and Jerusalem. During that period pilgrimages still continued to be made, but under what restrictions there is no history to tell us. About the beginning of the eleventh century, however (A.D. 1010), Hakem, the founder of the Druses of the Lebanon and of their devil-worship, destroyed the churches, and endeavoured to destroy the Holy Sepulchre itself. Hakem himself was a fierce and diabolical

persecutor of the Christians, and like all such he died a dark and mysterious death in the year 1021. Under his successor the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was once more rebuilt, but in A.D. 1077 the city itself passed into the possession of the Turks.

This was the period when many influences combined to originate the Crusades.

1. There was a very widely diffused opinion, about the time when a thousand years had elapsed from our Lord's First Advent, that He was about to appear a second time, and that the millenium was about to begin. In consequence of this opinion pilgrimages increased in number and frequency, although their danger had increased greatly under Turkish rule. Pilgrims were admitted to the Holy City at all only after the payment of a byzant, or about twenty shillings, for each person; and very often when the money had been paid, the pilgrims were refused admission, unless some powerful European noble was among them to protect their interests. Some of the hardships which the Christians had thus to undergo are illustrated by the account given of the pilgrimage undertaken by Robert, Duke of Normandy, the father of William the Conqueror. He set off from home with a train of knights and barons, but walked barefoot as a pilgrim with a staff and wallet. For greater humiliation he sent his attendants forward and followed by himself in their path. But on his way through Asia

Minor he was taken so ill that he was compelled to use a litter, on which he was carried by four Mahometans, who seem to have treated him with inhumanity, for he sent a message home by a returning pilgrim whom he met on the way in these words, "Tell my people thou hast met me where I was borne of devils to Paradise." On coming to the gates of Jerusalem he found there a great crowd of poor pilgrims unable to meet the expense of the fee exacted by the Mahometans for their entrance. For all of these he paid the byzant demanded, and then visited the holy places himself with devotion and reverence. He died shortly afterwards at Nicæa, on his return to Europe.

2. At this time also the Turks were exciting the fear as well as the hatred of Christians; for they were spreading their dominion in the most alarming manner. All over Asia and Africa, the Antichristian sign of the crescent had supplanted the sign of the Son of Man: churches were destroyed by them; Bishops murdered; Christians slaughtered in crowds; and Christianity all but exterminated wherever they went. Having secured Cyprus, Candia, Sicily, and the southern coast of Italy, they extended their conquests to Spain, and even invaded the south of France. It seemed as if they would before long secure Rome itself, and found a Western Empire under the religion of Mahomet, such as had been known under the Roman Emperors.

3. There was one special pilgrimage which excited the commiseration of Christendom at this time. The German Bishops of Maintz, Bamburg, Ratisbon and Utrecht set off in 1064, followed by seven thousand persons of all ranks in society; and including among others, Ingulph, English Secretary to William the Conqueror. In the following year two thousand survivors alone returned to their homes, persecuted and reduced to a wretched state of poverty and misery by the cruelty of the Mahometans.

While these circumstances were all preparing the way for the Crusades, an individual arose capable of giving them point and application, and of taking the lead in avenging the wrongs of Christian pilgrims. A weakly, unimpressive looking man, hitherto quite obscure, made his appearance at Jerusalem as a pilgrim in the year 1094. He had been a soldier, but had retired from the army; and, living a retired life at Amiens, in Picardy, had become known among his neighbours as Peter the Hermit. Arriving at Jerusalem at the time when the Turks were in full possession of the city, his righteous spirit was roused within him at the sight of the sepulchre of Christ in the hands of Antichrist; and the abomination of desolation, the Antichristian crescent, raising its head where the Cross had such supereminent claims to the ascendancy. He found, too, that extortion and cruelty were decimating

the Christians who came to offer their penitence and their prayers at the tomb of their dear Lord; that the churches lately rebuilt were again despoiled, and that nothing but insult and violence could be expected from these brutal infidels. His indignation being thoroughly aroused, he consulted the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and concerted with him a plan for securing the aid of European Christian Kings, Bishops, and people to redress these wrongs. Then, when the occasion had come, the great powers of the man made for it began to develope themselves. Under that insignificant monk's outside there was a fire of spirit, courage, and eloquence which sufficed to influence all Europe; and, by alarming the European nations to the real power and character of the Mahometan savages, to call all the countries of the West to the rescue, with vast armies of volunteers, which called themselves, not inappropriately, the armies of the Lord.

At the first outburst of universal indignation which Peter's eloquent exhortations and his denunciations of Mahometanism aroused, the efforts made to carry out his ideas were of an impatient and therefore disorganized character. An army of eighty thousand men started under his leadership; but for want of proper arrangements, it was reduced to one-third by death and desertion on its way through Hungary, and the remainder perished almost entirely under the walls of Nicæa. But this dear-bought experience led to a regular and efficient

force being sent out under the generalship of Godfrey of Boulogne, his brother Baldwin, Hugo the Great, brother of the King of France, and Robert, son of William the Conqueror. The numbers of this army amounted to a hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand; and it soon avenged the fate of its predecessor by taking Nicæa, Laodicea, and Antioch; and having established Christian rule in several important places, sixty thousand soldiers marched on the Holy City and recovered it in A.D. 1099, after slaughtering, with a fierceness that was not then thought inexcusable, a number of the enemy more than equal to that of their own army. Godfrey was crowned King of Jerusalem, and at his death, a year afterwards, his brother Baldwin was elected to succeed him; but the kingdom of Jerusalem was a mere garrison in an enemy's country, and unless vigorously supported by the European powers, it was impossible for it to hold out for any long period.

There is a link of connexion between our own times and the events now being narrated, in the orders of knighthood, which had their first origin in the circumstances connected with the pilgrimages to the Holy City. The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and the Knights Templars were military monks who undertook the duty of guarding pilgrims on their journey. In later times they settled down in fixed residences, especially at Rhodes and Malta, and became an extremely

powerful community during the Middle Ages, after the purpose for which they had been originally instituted had passed away. Traces of the Knights Templars are still to be found in England in the Temple Church, London, with its cross-legged figures of several of the knights, in the Round Churches at Northampton, Cambridge, and Maplestead; and in the names of several villages, as Temple Brewer, Lincolnshire, Temple Newsom, Yorkshire; Temple Cowley, near Oxford; places in which they possessed property and had small preceptories of their order. Like the Jesuits in modern times, the military knights were often suppressed; and, in fact, they had to undergo much persecution, many, at one period, being burned to death as heretics; but under various designations they existed as late as the present century, when the last of their body, the Knights of Malta, were suppressed by Napoleon, and were not restored by the English when the island was wrested out of his hands.

It is not necessary to follow up at length the story of the Crusades. St. Bernard endeavoured to arouse the spirit of Europe as Peter the Hermit had done, and a second crusade was undertaken for the support of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem. But treachery led to the failure of this expedition; and after being a Christian sovereignty for eighty-eight years, the Holy City was given up to Saladin in the year 1187; and has

never since been recovered from the Mahometans. Then came the third Crusade, in which our own Richard Cœur de Lion and Saladin were the most conspicuous personages. The Emperor of Germany, the King of France, and the King of England united their forces for the invasion of Palestine; but jealousies and divisions arose, and every thing was ultimately left to Richard. If personal bravery could have effected the object in view, it would not have remained unaccomplished. "He leaped on shore," says the old historian, "and struck the first blow; and before he could strike the second, five thousand knights were fighting by his side;" but all ended in leaving the Holy City, as before, in the hands of the Mahometans. We cannot prolong this chapter by telling the story of the good and brave St. Louis, or of our own strong knights and kings who followed in the path of Cœur de Lion. It is enough for our purpose to say that no Crusades after the first achieved any real triumph; and that as far as the direct object for which they were undertaken is concerned all of them must be regarded as total and signal failures.

But, notwithstanding the Crusades were such entire failures in respect to the object directly contemplated when they were undertaken, there is much in their history in which we can trace the providential hand of God; and much in the Crusaders themselves to entitle them to our respect. The time when these great Chris-

tian wars arose was just the crisis of the freedom of Europe. They were a life-struggle between Christ and Antichrist; between tyranny and freedom; between civilization and barbarism. Looking back to those times, we can see that if Christian warriors had not carried their arms into Mahometan Asia, Christian Europe would undoubtedly have been brought under the slavery of Turks and Mahometanism. And, while other wars have settled the boundaries of nations, these settled the boundaries of civilization: for when the garden of the East has become what it has under the barbarous rule of Mahometanism, there can be little doubt as to what our less fertile Europe would have become under the same deadening influence.

From a lower point of view, it has also been often shown that the Crusaders were the pioneers of commerce, since they opened up a much more extended intercourse between nation and nation than had ever been before those great armies traversed the breadth of Europe. They helped to diffuse knowledge, and to open up those highways of travel which have proved so great an advantage to subsequent ages.

But, the highest and broadest view which we should take of the Crusades as a portion of Ecclesiastical history, is one somewhat analogous to that which has already been taken in respect to the persecuting centuries. In the first ages, there was a great struggle between

Paganism and Christianity for the possession of the world: and a thousand years later Satan renewed the struggle, with Mahometanism for his representative. Paganism was not destroyed in the first struggle, nor was Mahometanism destroyed in the second: but the power of both was effectually withstood, and their progress effectually hindered. In the Diocletian persecution first, and in the defeat of the Crusaders at the later epoch, it seemed as if Christianity was about to be utterly defeated and its light extinguished: but though the waves of the sea raged horribly, there was a mighty Power at hand to say, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." If another such epoch is yet to come upon the world, it will probably come from some quarter as yet unindicated, and in a form of which we see only the forecast shadows. But let our faith in the stability of Christ's Church be made more firm by the contemplation of its past history. It has not yielded to the Pagan or the Mahometan Antichrist; and as is our experience of the past, such may be our confidence for the future:—"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

§. *The true Idea of the Mediæval Church.*

We have thus exhibited, as far as space has allowed, the general characteristics of the Church of the Middle Ages; but in going over so large a tract of history within

so short a compass, there must necessarily be much to confuse the mind, and leave it without as definite an impression of the journey as could be wished. It will often be noticed that when little children are beginning to learn history, their first inquiry is always directed to the character of the prominent personages of whom they are reading; and the childlike question, "Was he a good King?" may, perhaps, give us a useful hint as to the value of historical summaries. Let us, therefore, suppose ourselves to be asking at this moment, "Well, after all, was the Mediæval Church good or bad?" and let us endeavour to answer the question as concisely as possible; premising that a candid answer is not likely to be of that class which sets down all Mediæval religion as bad, ignorant, and Popish; nor yet of the other, which the Roman Catholic, Pugin, satirized for idealizing the Middle Ages as "holy priests, holy monks, happy people, holy every body." The character of every age must be like the character of every man, a mixture of good and evil; and it is the lot of the Visible Church to have the character of the age stamped upon her. To suppose the Mediæval Church wholly spotless or entirely black would therefore be as irrational as to picture bad men without any good in them, or good men without any stain of evil.

1. Something is undoubtedly to be said in favour of the Mediæval Church, on the score of its external grandeur. The fabrics of its churches, and the accessories of

Divine Worship were of the most costly and beautiful kind that the skill and money of man could procure; secondary buildings, such as monasteries, were often like palaces—not for the sake of personal luxury, for each monk lived in his small cell in the midst of it all; but, because they were places dedicated to religious uses, including religious hospitality on a grand scale; and because, in principle at least, they were dedicated to the glory of God. It was the same with all other things in which religion was an element. There might be, and was, much meanness in the domestic arrangements even of the rich in the Middle Ages; but meanness in religious arrangements was unknown. It was, at the least, as settled a feeling in the minds of Mediæval Christians that every thing connected with the Church ought to be of the best that could be, as it is in the mind of every loyal Englishman, that every thing should be of the best which is connected with his sovereign. It must be remembered, too, that the sumptuous fabrics, and the costly worship of the Middle Ages were provided for chiefly on the voluntary principle. Never was that principle so fully carried out as then. Even the work of our modern Church of England—which is a greater voluntaryist than any sect of Dissenters, or all of them put together—shrinks into small proportions when set beside that of the same Church of England six hundred and eight hundred years ago. We may take as an

illustration the building or rebuilding of a cathedral; and although the whole cost of the building often spread over several generations, yet we know pretty well how large portions were executed in the time of particular Bishops; and we know what an enormous expenditure must have been incurred in the architectural achievements of a Wykeham, a Waynfleet, or a Pudsey: and where individual names have passed away, the individuality of masses of building remains to attest the rapidity with which such great works were effected. The cost of rebuilding the spire of Chichester cathedral, which was blown down in 1861, has been about 60,000*l.*[1] The cost of a full-proportioned spire in the general estimate of a church is about one-seventh of the whole. So that we may reckon 400,000*l.* as a moderate estimate for the building of a middle-sized cathedral like Chichester. But the experience of modern national buildings seems to show that York or Canterbury must have cost much more than this; nor is it likely that any experienced builder could be found hardy enough to engage that he would reproduce Ely for half a million of money, when St. Pancras, and All Saints, Margaret Street, are known to have each required the expenditure of about one-sixth of that sum.

We need not dwell, however, upon this subject, though,

[1] The cost of re-casing only the central tower of Durham has been 7000*l.*

of course, there is ample room for showing that the fabrics of the Middle Ages were but one channel by which wealth was dedicated to religious uses. Nor need we take much pains to show that this expenditure is a fair indication of heartiness in religion on the part of those who made it. Persons who maintain strongly that costly gifts to religion are no test of this, are, most frequently, those who have never made the experiment. Those who have done so would probably feel some righteous indignation at the imputation that their dedication of money to pious uses was nothing but a mere formality, and most warm-hearted men and women would sympathize with them. It is not, indeed, to be denied that much of the wealth which was bestowed on the shrines of saints in the Middle Ages had better have been bestowed on the altar of God, or given in alms to the poor, though neither God's altar nor the poor were neglected. And it may perhaps be observed that the Church has had greatest difficulty in standing against the opposition of sin, unbelief, and worldliness exactly where the channels of worship, love, and oblation of wealth were most diverted from their legitimate course. This thought has often come vividly to the minds of some of us when standing in magnificent churches where the only offerings traceable to times since the Reformation were a deal altar-table, a green baize altar-cloth, and a sounding-board for the pulpit;

but in which we could also trace all around us the marks where there had stood in earlier days a number of subordinate altars, and the pedestals of sculptured figures, which had been used for something more than the comely decoration of God's House. But making all deductions that we are justly bound to make on this account, we must still acknowledge that the dedication of wealth to God and His service, in Mediæval days, was in such large proportions as no subsequent century has seen[2].

2. As the Christianity of those times was grand in its external character, so also it was a great supporter of learning. The Universities are creations of the Mediæval Church as well as the cathedrals. No one can have passed through the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, even as a casual visitor, without being struck by the magnitude of the provision there made for education, and education of the highest kind. Now, of the twenty-four colleges and halls in Oxford, nineteen were founded and endowed before the Reformation[3]; and of the seventeen colleges and halls at Cambridge, thirteen were founded before that period. That is, between A.D. 1219, and A.D. 1519, nearly the whole of our two great Uni-

[2] There is reason to doubt whether the last quarter of a century, say from 1840 to 1866, has not rivalled the best periods of the Middle Ages in respect to church building and restoration. Millions have been spent on these objects in our day.

[3] One or two, as Exeter and Trinity, have been so added to (after alienations at the Reformation) as to be called "new" foundations.

versities became established on, at least, their present magnificent scale. It may be added that only three colleges,—Downing, at Cambridge, with Pembroke and Worcester, at Oxford, have been founded since the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and of these, Pembroke College was only an enlargement of Broadgates Hall, while Worcester College located itself in the old buildings already provided by a despoiled monastery. It must also be remembered that the Universities existed long before the formation of the earliest existing college, and were flourishing institutions, frequented (according to contemporary authorities) by much larger numbers of students than now receive their education there, during the whole period of the Middle Ages. It is only necessary to add, what no one need doubt[4] who has really examined the matter and qualified themselves to offer an opinion, that these institutions were as real nurseries of learning for the days in which they were founded as they ever have been since; while, with respect to their government, it is a fact that all modern improvements are substantially in the direction of a return to the ancient statutes; always excepting, of course, those particulars which are connected with sciences not known in bygone ages.

3. Of the orthodoxy and errors of the Mediæval

[4] In spite of the sneers that are sometimes cast at the study of Aristotle and Peter Lombard.

Church hardly any more condensed opinion can be given than in the statements already made. Taking the people of England at large there is no reason to suppose there were more wrong-believers in the worst times than there were,—say in the last century: and, of course, this is a fair kind of comparison when it is remembered that the Church claimed all the people of England practically as well as theoretically before the Reformation, and, therefore, got credit for all religious errors that arose in the land, as arising among her members: but that in modern days, the Church can escape from any imputation of being connected with the errors of Dissenting sects. Respecting the amount of practical piety too, probably all well-informed and charitable-minded persons agree that we have no reason to cast stones at Mediæval Christians, even if a better condition in our own times gave us a seeming right: though, of course, it is extremely difficult to find any thing like positive evidence of personal piety in ages when so little record at all was left of the great mass of Christian people. Unfavourable impressions of Mediæval piety mostly rest on general assertions and preconceived opinions. These are not sufficient ground for an impartial mind to build up a theory upon: but at the same time there is very little ground at all on which any opinion agreeing or disagreeing with those impressions can be formed. Certainly those ages seem to have been far from irreligious;

and there are not a few historical characters who must be called religious in the very best sense of the word. Let us hope that there were many more such among those whose names no history has recorded: and there is no reason to think that our hope will be founded on an excess of charity.

One characteristic there was in the religion of the Middle Ages which essentially distinguishes them from our own time. Religion was evidently much more demonstrative then than now; and was not ashamed of showing its face. At the present day Englishmen find it hard to sympathize with this demonstrativeness, even within the walls of the Church; and a great many of us feel most at home when all the religion around us is of a perfectly cold and unimpassioned character, so far as the outward man goes. Thus there has been among us a great distaste for expressive ritualistic usages as "histrionic," for earnest preaching as "Methodist," and so forth. Now, whether this sort of feeling is better than the opposite, we need not stay to inquire: but as a matter of fact it is quite certain that the feeling was unknown to Mediæval Christians, and that it is almost unknown even now among all people except ourselves. We should, therefore, judge harshly and unfairly if we were to decide that religion was unreal in them when it was connected with gorgeous colour, elaborate music, formal ritual observances, and long out-of-door or in-door

processions. Copes and chasubles, and altar-frontals of varied hue: chaunts and antiphons and intoned prayers: crosses, candles, and incense; these were not unreal symbols belonging to a religion which was without heart. They were rather the form in which the heart religion of that day was embodied: and certainly they were not less worthy of respect in the abstract, than that embodiment of heart religion which consists in sitting in the hidden privacy of a high pew to listen to prayers and a sermon. No, let us view these things honestly, and fairly, and charitably — if any charity is needed—and believe that Christians of past days have been as real and as true in their warm demonstrativeness as we are in our self-possessed reserve. It may be that they would have been gainers by the gift of some of our reserve: it may be that we should be gainers by some of their warmth; but it may also be doubted whether our reserved habits of religion would have been thought any religion at all by those who were used to a system so much more demonstrative than that in which we have been trained up. But to consider the question beyond the mere historical view would be beyond our present purpose; and these remarks must therefore conclude with the suggestion that, as there was more room for the development of the imaginative than for the practical part of the intellect in the times of which we have been treating, so probably the form in which

religion was then clothed was one peculiarly suited to the human mind in its then condition, and one which was well fitted in the Providence of God to carry out that work upon the soul through the bodily senses, which must always be carried on in some way or other as long as souls and bodies are in such close union with each other.

Lastly, let us close these pages with this conviction, that we have no reason to be ashamed of our ancestors' religion; or of the Church of which our own is a continuation. If we do not altogether sympathize with the usages and with some of the doctrines of the Mediæval Church, if we think there was much to be disapproved of in monastic institutions, if the Crusades do not win our entire respect; yet we may find, by looking for it, much holiness, much love, much zeal, much true devotion, among the Christians who made up the Church, and founded the monasteries, and fought the Crusades; and holiness, love, zeal, and devotion may warm our hearts towards those ages, as they do towards our contemporary brethren. We may also believe, as well as hope, that such virtues have carried men to heaven in the Church of the Middle Ages, as surely as they do, by God's mercy, in that of the nineteenth century.

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